# HITLER as PHILOSOPHE

## Remnants of the Enlightenment in National Socialism

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# Preface

The resurgence of racial nationalism has raised, once again, the question of Hitlerism and its place within Western civilization. As booted skinheads rampage their way through *Mitteleuropa* and politicians like Vladimir Zhirinovsky hoist the banner of neo-fascism, Hitler's ghost seems to proclaim triumphantly, "See, I was right after all." At a time when intellectuals are moving toward a globalist relativism, nationalist passions continue to survive on a popular level in the most virulent form. While a complacent intelligentsia speaks of a new world order, ethnic conflict everywhere bubbles up from below.

Ironically, I have also been guilty of underestimating the significance of nationalism. While my first book, *Consuming Desire: Sexual Science and the Emergence of a Culture of Abundance, 1871–1914*, showed how twentieth-century consumerism represented the extension of the key values of liberty and equality to their furthest limit, that study was utterly silent about the equally important value of fraternity. Not only did *Consuming Desire* completely ignore the subject of nationalism; it also ignored the important question of national variations in Western thought. Exemplifying the complacency of the postmodern intellectual, I was uninterested in those nationalist ideologies that had managed to survive into a post-nationalist world. But since 1988 and the publication of my first book, I have undergone a profound intellectual revolution, and for two reasons. In 1989, I was hired at Ball State University to teach intellectual history. My job also included a commitment to give a course on the history of modern Germany, a subject that up to then had left me cold. My newfound teaching duties inevitably led me to reconsider the so-called "German Question" and thus the problem of nationalism as a whole. At the same time, the unification of Germany

itself seemed to exemplify the resurgence of national self-determination as a powerful ideology that refused to die. The more intellectuals attempted to expel nationalism, the more it seemed to sneak in through the back door. The tendency to give nationalism a racial foundation thus represented a veritable "return of the repressed." It appeared that if a specter was truly haunting late-twentieth-century civilization, that specter was Hitlerism. I thus became convinced that the only way to exorcise that restless spirit was to reexamine it.

This study represents an attempt to do just that. In the following chapters, I have situated Hitler's ideology in the tripartite model developed in *Consuming Desire*. In a sense, then, this book represents a kind of sequel to that earlier work. Whereas the latter dealt with liberty and equality, this study examines fraternity. More significantly, it attempts to see Hitlerism as part of the larger context of Western thought rather than as an isolated (and thus inexplicable) phenomenon.

Since this project grew out of several years' thought and research, it has taken a number of forms. The book originated as an unpublished paper I circulated in 1989. Another paper, this one on Hitler's economic ideas, was presented before a conference at Duke University in August 1990 and later published. It eventually became the nucleus for chapter 4. Still another article, this one on "volkish nationalism," appeared in *The History Teacher*. This piece became the basis for chapter 2. By degrees, the other chapters began to take shape until the entire project was complete at the beginning of 1994. While writing, I began to develop what might be considered a kind of heresy. Increasingly, I have come to believe that the only way to exorcise Hitlerism is to steal from it its few "constructive" features. In particular, this means that we must disentangle its racist and its nationalist elements. In others words, just as Hitler conquered Marx by severing the link between socialism and internationalism, we can conquer Hitler only by cutting the tie between racism and nationalism. But this can be done only by recognizing that this tie is a product of history and not logic.

In the meantime, I would like to thank my colleagues Ray White and John Barber for suffering through long discussions about this project, offering good advice along the way. The excellent German history collection at the Bracken Library, accumulated in part by my predecessor Richard Wires, was also extremely helpful. Finally, I would like to thank Anson Rabinbach for first suggesting that my 1989 paper might be expanded to book length.

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# Introduction: Hitler and the History of Ideas

Few scholars would award Hitler much of a place in the history of ideas. While there are literally thousands of books about national socialism, the number of studies that actually deal with Hitler's thought could be counted on one hand. Historians of ideas are likely to dismiss that thought as "shoddy," "simplistic" or just plain deranged. But if we are to read Hitler neither to condemn nor to praise but merely to understand, then we come away with a very different conclusion about his place in European intellectual history. As early as 1953, H. R. Trevor-Roper evoked the image of Hitler as a kind of synthesis of Spengler and Napoleon, noting that of all world conquerors the German leader had been the most "philosophical" even if he had also been the "cruellest."[1] Read with an open mind, Hitler indeed appears as a startlingly intelligent thinker who felt compelled to work out an elaborate political philosophy. In particular, if we agree that intellectuals should be judged as much for the questions they ask as for their answers, then Hitler must be regarded as a genuine intellectual.

The tendency to deny Hitler his proper place in European intellectual history tells us as much about the way we look at that history as about Hitler himself. There are in fact two flaws in the way we do that history that predispose us to exclude Hitler from its canon. In the first place, intellectual historians have an implicit bias toward the notion that a powerful thinker must also be an ethical one. In the second place, they have a stake in the belief that Western civilization as a whole has been a force for good. In other words, intellectual historians idealize both intellectual history and the intellectuals who make it. Scholars have consequently more or less excised Hitler from his place in Western culture as a means of sanitizing that culture.

In their desire to excise Hitler's thought from its larger Western context, intellectual historians have pursued two related strategies. Both strategies represent ad hominem arguments that attempt to discredit Hitler's ideas on the basis of their author. On the one hand, these critics seem to argue, the German leader was not a real intellectual because he cared too little about ideas. On the other hand, they suggest, he cared too much about them. But if the first strategy damns Hitler as a psychopath, the second dismisses him as a psychotic. Each serves to save the honor of the West by dismissing Hitlerism as a freak occurrence. Let us briefly consider these strategies before reviewing what I would regard is the proper approach to the study of Hitler's thought.

## I

Advocates of the psychopathic theory of Hitlerism have taken their cue from the work of Hermann Rauschning. A one-time supporter of Hitler, Rauschning saw national socialism as a concoction of contradictory slogans whose only real purpose was the consolidation of power. His thesis appeared convincing because the German leader seemed to tailor his speeches to his audience, saying to each group what it wanted to hear. Hitler's so-called ideas, Rauschning believed, were thus a vicious means to a tawdry end. Here was the old notion that evil men cannot respect ideas, because having ideas is essentially good. Rauschning's thesis was attacked a generation later by Eberhard Jäckel who argued, on the contrary, that Hitler was committed to a coherent worldview of "startling consistency" even if he rarely explained it to his public.[2] Unfortunately, Jäckel accepted Rauschning's assumption that the will to knowledge and the will to power were somehow distinguishable.

It is precisely this assumption that needs to be questioned if we are truly to reintegrate Hitlerism into the intellectual history of the West. Rather than debate over whether Hitler subordinated knowledge to power as Rauschning maintained, or power to knowledge as Jäckel argued, let us accept the proposition that the will to knowledge and the will to power are one and the same. Instead of the false dichotomization of power and knowledge that places, say, Marx and Freud in the camp of thinkers, and Hitler in the camp of doers, we need to reintegrate power and knowledge in order to understand all three figures as intellectuals.[3]

I therefore want to postulate the existence of what might be called a "will to intellectual power." Like Marx and Freud, Hitler first of all derived his sense of self-importance from developing a weltanschauung that not only explained the world but gave his own life a paramount significance within it. If in *Mein Kampf* he derived immense satisfaction from being both a politician and a theoretician, he was the latter first. Long before he came to the chancellory, Hitler fancied himself a kind of "Copernicus of anti-Semi-

tism" who had founded a new doctrine as radical and all-embracing as Marx's.[4] Thus, while Rauschning and his epigones were not wrong in assuming that the führer was above all possessed by the will to power, they failed to recognize that will first of all expressed itself in the realm of ideas. Strange that scholars who make their living from ideas have underestimated their importance as a source of Hitler's self-esteem. Strange that intellectuals who debate over whether the word or power was primary for Hitler fail to recognize the fact that for him the word *was* the power.

Fusing the "will to power" and the "will to knowledge" in a single drive allows us to reintegrate Hitler into the larger history of Western civilization, so that he takes his place alongside Marx and Freud. Looked at from a certain angle, these three great system builders resemble each other. To start with, all three sought to do something "great" in the intellectual sphere. Marx wanted to destroy all the gods of the earth, Freud dreamed of becoming famous, and Hitler knew that he would one day become "something." Moreover, this will to power expressed itself above all in intellectual activity. Marx discharged his ferocious rage in combining philosophy with praxis. Freud openly admitted that he was more a "conquistador—an adventurer" than a man of science.[5] And, from the beginning, Hitler sought recognition as a "brain worker," describing himself time and again as an "artist," "architect" or even a "writer." Hitler's real vocations, whether as theoretician or propagandist, were always cerebral. For Hitler, constructing an ideology was nothing less than a kind of intellectual architecture. [6]

Moreover, Marx and Freud, like Hitler, were possessed of an overwhelming grandiosity. Marx was convinced that he had discovered the laws of history itself. Freud hailed himself as a new Copernicus. In the same way, as early as 1923, Hitler saw himself as a kind of intellectual messiah preparing the way for a Germanic millennium. All three created coherent systems that legitimized themselves as revealers of universal truths. More significantly, they each attempted to institutionalize their ideas. Alongside Hitler's building up of a truly ideological party, we must put Marx's attempt to create an "international" based on communist principles and Freud's founding of the psychoanalytic "movement." Like Hitler, Marx and Freud reacted ferociously to critics, especially if these critics were close to their position. Marx sought to demolish rival socialists by stigmatizing them as "utopian"; Freud made it his business to relegate his rivals to obscurity; Hitler wrote *Mein Kampf* to establish his primacy not so much over the left or the right as over rival "volkish" thinkers. Each was obsessed with claiming intellectual priority in his field; neither Marx, Freud nor Hitler would admit he was significantly influenced by anyone. In claiming that his ideas arose sui generis, each claimed a semi-divine significance in the world of ideas. All three consequently raged against sectarians and schismatics with a ferocity reminiscent of that of the medieval church. Marx

denounced Bakunin and Lassalle; Freud, Adler and Jung; Hitler, the Strasser brothers for similar reasons.[7]

In addition, Marx and Freud both constructed all-embracing systems with which they identified their self-worth. Each clung to a set of core ideas which, when challenged, were cleverly reworked to explain new data. Both Marx and Freud thus possessed a kind of strategic consistency along with a real tactical flexibility. Hitler fit this pattern too. Any analysis of his so-called weltanschauung must thus recognize its kinship to the other secular ideologies that flourished in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, thus putting it in the mainstream of Western civilization as a whole.

## II

Another way in which historians of ideas have attempted to excise Hitlerism from European intellectual history has been to dismiss it as the product of a diseased mind. Conceding that Hitler was committed to an ideology after all, they have attempted to explain away that ideology by seeing it as an outgrowth of his personal obsessions. Starting with William Langer, certain "psychohistorians" have traced Hitler's ideas to his childhood experiences. The locus of evil, their argument goes, was in Hitler's family and not European intellectual history as a whole. Although scholars like Richard Koenigsburg and, more recently, Robert Waite have recognized the existence of other factors in the genesis of national socialism, their work leaves the impression that the movement was ultimately the brainchild of a single pathological individual who imposed his diseased will on the rest of Europe. Hitler's excesses could thus be excised from the larger history of the West.[8]

But to dismiss national socialism (and especially Hitler's particular version of it) as mere pathology is just a little too neat. While psychohistorians have concluded that Hitler suffered from a disturbance of ideation which tainted his thought with madness, this conclusion has been ruled out of court by those who have carefully studied his medical history.[9] It is thus hard not to suspect that this psychologizing of Hitlerism is really a way of shifting all the blame from a whole culture to a set of individuals. In this way, Western civilization has projected its own guilt on Hitler who must bear sole responsibility for a set of ideas he transformed but did not completely create. Employing this mechanism, Europe perceives as alien ("crazy") its own anti-Semitism, its own racism. The West thus complacently forgets that numerous individuals, quite sound in mind and body, held the most monstrous notions.

Perhaps the best solution is to recognize that what made Hitler unique (pathological, if you will) was not the nature of his convictions but the intensity with which he held them. If Hitler suffered from a pathological

condition at all, it was a pathology of mood rather than one of ideation since the latter would have soon left him with no followers while the former actually attracted followers by intensifying a preexisting ideology.[10] Psychohistory, I would thus argue, has more of a role in understanding what Hitler's ideas meant to him than in explaining the content of those ideas.

Ideology, for Hitler, was clearly necessary to give his life meaning. In that sense, he was "the word." Moreover, Hitler's worldview not only gave him a sense of all-knowing confidence, but allowed him to express that confidence to others even if the latter had no real understanding of what he believed. It was indeed this sense of "standing for something" that contributed to the Hitlerian mythos. But a kind of reality principle forced him to balance political against ideological exigencies. Simultaneously, he had to refrain from alienating potential followers and yet retain the coherent ideology that sustained him. The solution was to lie by omission rather than commission. To the workers, he would say that he hated classes without telling them he believed in private property. To the bosses, he would say that he admired initiative without telling them that he hated classes. He thus tailored each speech to its respective audience without ever really repudiating his all-important weltanschauung. Clearly, he derived an enormous satisfaction from possessing that weltanschauung. But precisely because Hitler's personality explains how he used his ideas without really explaining their content, there remains a role for intellectual history.[11]

## III

A central problem with both the "psychopathic" and the "psychotic" analysis of Hitlerism is that their approach to intellectual history is far too individualistic. Each implies that the history of ideas can be understood in a thoroughly ad hominem manner when in fact that history is more complex. For example, both those who question Hitler's sincerity and those who question his sanity seem to see intellectual history as a series of influences in which individual A affects B, who in turn affects C. Historians have thus spent a great deal of time trying to find "where" Hitler got his ideas, whether he believed in them or not. Not only can the "influence" approach to the history of ideas be challenged on philosophical grounds, but it seems particularly questionable when applied to the study of Hitlerism. Historians who wish to demean Hitler's ideas (and thus minimize their connection to mainstream Western thought) have tended to regard them as a derivation or even a distortion of the ideas of other thinkers, who are in turn usually dismissed as unrepresentative of the best traditions of the West. The tawdry character of Hitlerism is supposed to derive from its roots in the half-baked fantasies of a Lanz von Liebensfels or an H. S. Chamberlain.[12] It is unlikely, however, that biographers will ever be able to determine

for sure what books Hitler read, or, assuming he read them, what books actually "influenced" him.

In the following chapters, I intend to approach the study of Hitler's thought from a different angle. Let us assume that ideas are not mere derivations from earlier ideas but rather a kind of intellectual adaptation. We might here employ an analogy. The fact that a bat and a pterodactyl both have wings does not prove that the latter is directly descended from the former, but rather that both species developed similar structures in adapting to similar environments. Now, it is my contention that ideologies represent a kind of adaptation to given sociocultural environments. In this context, it is not so much that Wagner "influenced" Hitler as that, confronting similar problems, they developed similar ideologies. Even if ideas are transmitted through time, their importance erodes or expands according to the social environment. Understood as a kind of intellectual adaptation or problem-solving device, and not merely as a system of fantasies, Hitlerism thus claims a much more intimate place within the larger context of European intellectual history. This book, then, is an attempt to explore how Hitler's ideas "fit" into that history as a whole. My interest will be less on what immediate "influences" shaped Hitler's ideology than on how it resembles other Western ideologies (such as Marxism and psychoanalysis) which may not have directly influenced it at all but had to solve similar problems. Hopefully, this reintegration of Hitler's thought into its larger Western context may shed as much light on the latter as on the former.

## IV

One of the advantages of studying Hitler's ideas is the richness and variety of the sources. The earliest significant glimpse into the German leader's mind is a letter apparently written to Adam Gemlich on September 16, 1919, dealing with the subject of the Jews. This document, which called for replacing emotional anti-Semitism with an "anti-Semitism of reason," suggests that the then thirty-year-old Hitler had already developed the first elements of a radical political ideology that sought to give an all-embracing explanation for world affairs.[13] The details of that ideology were elaborated in Hitler's speeches, the earliest complete example of which was an address given on August 13, 1920, in the great hall of the Hofbraühaus and later published in the *Vierteljahrsheft für Zeitgeschichte* with a commentary by R. H. Phelps. In this nearly interminable speech, Hitler elaborated the connections between anti-Semitism and the larger social problems of Germany which he had only hinted at in his letter to Gemlich.[14] Still more useful is the definitive collection of the German leader's addresses edited by Norman Baynes. While Baynes's collection does not begin until April 12, 1922, he includes enough early material to give us a sense of how Hitler sought to position himself between the left and the right almost from the

very beginning of his career. Baynes also includes the full text of Hitler's speech to the Industrie-Klub in Düsseldorf on January 27, 1932, "one of his greatest triumphs as an orator."[15] One drawback of this two-volume collection is that it includes speeches only up to August 1939.

Another source, although perhaps one that should be used more cautiously, is Gordon Prange's compilation of *Hitler's Words*, which includes material from 1923 to 1943. Prange is mainly valuable because he has compiled many of Hitler's articles from the *Volkischer Beobachter*. But this "journalistic" material, which was clearly meant only for the widest public consumption, is perhaps too veiled to be of much use to the intellectual historian.[16]

Far more indispensable are Hitler's two books. The first, originally appearing in two volumes in 1925 and 1927, is of course the notorious *Mein Kampf*. In this study, I followed the conventional practice of utilizing Ralph Manheim's translation, first published by Houghton Mifflin in 1943. While virtually all of Hitler's ideas can be found in these two volumes, their organization presents a real challenge to the intellectual historian since it subordinates theme to chronology. The result is that different ideas are taken up, dropped and taken up again. As Charles Bracelen Flood has recently noted, *Mein Kampf* may have been a "supremely false redefinition of the human condition, but it was not stupidly written." Perhaps its intended audience was simply not able to appreciate Hitler's desire to tell a story and lay down a doctrine simultaneously.[17] In contrast, Hitler's *Zweites Buch*, written in 1928 but published only in 1961, is far clearer. Concentrating mainly on foreign policy, its style and even its phrasing are more or less similar to that of *Mein Kampf* but its organization is far simpler. This may be because it is, in many ways, a far less ambitious work than its predecessor with a narrower (and thus clearer) focus.[18] For the student, the main value of this so-called "secret book" is in the way it reinforces and sometimes clarifies concepts Hitler developed elsewhere.

Another useful source, though one that should be approached with a certain care, is the so-called *Tischgesprache*, or *Table Talk*. This collection of documents spans the period from 1941 to 1944, when Hitler spoke less and less in public. While Hitler's ramblings at dinner obviously do not represent a reasoned exposition of his ideas, they are valuable because of their frankness. Before his courtiers, he was more likely to voice his real opinions than in any *Volkischer Beobachter* article destined for the public. Moreover, Hitler was a tireless orator even before a small group, one who could talk with incredible fluency on a variety of topics. Undisciplined as it is, *Tischgesprache* is useful in order to clarify certain conceptions that (for obviously political reasons) appear in a veiled form in Hitler's published books and speeches. Interestingly, *Table Talk* appeared in two different forms, a thematic text edited by Dr. Henry Picker and a chronological text edited by Martin Bormann. While they do not cover exactly the same time

period, "the two versions, where they coincide" are "in all material respects the same."[19] In the end, this duplication reinforces *Table Talk's* claim to authenticity.

A fragment of *Table Talk* was published in French and later in English (but not in German for understandable reasons) under the title *The Testament of Adolph Hitler*. A record of Hitler's final reminiscences about the war, it was apparently taken down by Bormann himself from February to April 1945. Bathed in the blood-drenched sunset of his political career, Hitler mournfully surveyed the ruins he had left behind. Politically, he had succeeded in virtually nothing except the (perhaps temporary) destruction of Central European Jewry. He remained convinced, however, that he had achieved a clear *understanding* of world politics that might be passed down to future generations. In the end, even Hitler seems to have believed that his main accomplishments were intellectual.[20]

Meanwhile, we are confronted with how to organize all this material. On the one hand, a purely chronological approach would better fit an "influence" model of intellectual history quite inappropriate in studying an essentially static ideology. On the other hand, a purely thematic approach would fail to situate that ideology in its larger historical context. I have thus sought to strike a balance between the two approaches. In the following study of Hitler's ideas, the first and third parts are organized along fundamentally chronological lines while the second part is basically thematic. The thematic discussion of Hitler's ideas elaborated in chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 is thus situated in the historical context developed in chapters 1, 2 and the epilogue.

Within this framework, certain rules have been followed in attempting to reconstruct (and thus deconstruct) Hitler's thought. In order to ascertain whether or not Hitler had a certain idea, it was sometimes necessary to compare statements from several sources. In general, all the materials listed above were divided into two groups, the first of which consisted of *Mein Kampf* alone and the second of which included everything else. The extreme coherence of Hitler's ideology from the mid-twenties on was reflected in the fact that similar statements about a host of issues were found in numerous different places, whatever the date. In general, the two groups of sources required a different methodology in order to reconstruct Hitler's views. In the first group (*Mein Kampf*), the main problem was gathering up different statements in which Hitler more or less honestly expressed his opinions about a subject, albeit in a very disorganized manner. In the second group, however, the problem was to combine fragments from several different sources. In particular, it was sometimes obvious that Hitler was tailoring a speech to a particular audience and was telling only "half the truth." For example, in *Mein Kampf*, Hitler implied that national socialism must position itself between the left and the right. Yet in his speeches before working-class audiences he identified himself with socialism just as he

identified himself with capitalism in his addresses to businessmen. Only by putting together the last two sources and then comparing them with *Mein Kampf* do we get the full picture. In fact, this methodology has proven most useful in reconciling what at first appear to be contradictory statements.[21]

## V

The nature of the sources delineated above suggests that any intellectual historian dealing with Hitler faces a profound ethical problem. Even if we concede that the German leader was a thinker of great power who possessed a coherent system, that system was presented most unsystematically. On the one hand, it may be argued, leaving Hitler's ideas scattered among a number of different documents diminishes their force. On the other hand, undertaking a systemization of those ideas in order to understand them gives them a certain respectability. But, I would argue, such a view is based upon the "influence" model of intellectual history, and that model needs to be modified. Of course, if ideas are simply derived from older ideas, to make Hitlerism more comprehensible is to encourage its spread. But, if ideas are really adaptations as I believe, then to make Hitlerism more comprehensible may in fact discourage its spread. Let me try to explain why this is so. In the former Soviet Union and, to a lesser extent, the United States, certain social conditions have created an environment ripe for fascism. We need only think of the rise of Vladimir Zhirinovsky in Russia. The fragmentation of the nation-state in the midst of a spreading globalism, the mutual exhaustion of the two former superpowers after forty years of Cold War and the rise of racial tension in both countries as a result of economic contraction have all created a social "niche" for the fascist adaptation. In this context, forgetting about Hitlerism may not prevent and indeed may even encourage the rise of new forms of racial nationalism. Conversely, a careful study of Hitlerism may lead us to separate the often valid questions Hitler asked from the monstrous answers he gave.

## NOTES

1. See the introduction by H. R. Trevor-Roper in Adolph Hitler, *Hitler's Table Talk 1941–44: His Private Conversations*, trans. Norman Cameron and R. H. Stevens (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1973), pp. xi–xxxix.

2. Hermann Rauschning, *The Revolution of Nihilism: Warning to the West* (New York: Longmans, 1939); Eberhard Jäckel, *Hitler's World View: A Blueprint for Power* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), pp. 13–26.

3. For one attempt to reintegrate power and knowledge, see Michel Foucault, "Truth and Power," in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977* (New York: Pantheon, 1980), pp. 109–33.

4. Hitler, like Freud, admired Copernicus as the paradigmatic intellectual revolutionary. See, for example, Hitler, *Table Talk*, pp. 323, 324, 445, 510.

5. See Jeffrey Masson, ed., *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to William Fliess* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 398.

6. For an assessment of Hitler as an intellectual, see Werner Maser, *Hitler: Legend, Myth and Reality* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), pp. 117–93.

7. For an example of Freud's skills as a politician of psychoanalysis, see his brilliant polemic against Jung and Adler in Sigmund Freud, *On the Origin of the Psycho-Analytic Movement* (New York: Norton, 1967), pp. 48–66.

8. William Langer, *The Mind of Adolph Hitler: The Secret Wartime Report* (New York: Basic Books, 1972); R. A. Koenigsberg, *Hitler's Ideology* (New York: Library of Social Science, 1975); Robert Waite, *The Psychopathic God—Adolph Hitler* (New York: Basic Books, 1977); Norbert Bromberg and Vera Small, *Hitler's Psychopathology* (New York: International Universities Press, 1983).

9. See, for example, Leonard Heston, M.D., and Renate Heston, *The Medical Casebook of Adolph Hitler* (New York: Stein and Day, 1979), pp. 118ff. The authors are particularly critical of psychohistorical speculation.

10. The Hestons, however, reject the notion of even a manic-depressive illness, conceding only that Hitler probably became dependent on amphetamines *very late in his career* (c. 1943). See Heston and Heston, *Medical Casebook*, pp. 83–84, 116, 121.

11. For a discussion of Hitler as a politician, see Ian Kershaw, *Hitler* (London: Longman, 1991), pp. 16–61.

12. The "pathological character" of Hitler's intellectual milieu is emphasized by Waite, *Psychopathic God*, pp. 74–123.

13. For the complete text of this letter, see Adolph Hitler, *Hitler's Letters and Notes*, comp. by Werner Maser (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), pp. 213–16.

14. R. H. Phelps, "Hitlers 'Grundlegende' Rede über den Anti-Semitismus," *Vierteljarhsheft für Zeitgeschichte* 16 (1968): pp. 390–420.

15. Adolph Hitler, *The Speeches of Adolph Hitler, April 1922–August 1939: An English Translation of Representative Passages Arranged under Subjects*, 2 vols., ed. Norman Baynes. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1942).

16. Adolph Hitler, *Hitler's Words*, ed. Gordon Prange (Washington, DC: American Council on Public Affairs, 1944).

17. Adolph Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1943). For a discussion of the organization of the book, see Jäckel, *Hitler's World View*, pp. 111–17, and Werner Maser, *Hitler's 'Mein Kampf': An Analysis* (London: Faber, 1970). See also Charles Bracelin Flood, *Hitler: The Path to Power* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1989), p. 594.

18. Adolph Hitler, *Hitlers zweites Buch: Ein Dokument aus dem Jahr 1928*, ed. Gerhard Weinberg (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1961), translated as *Hitler's Secret Book* (New York: Grove Press, 1961).

19. Adolph Hitler, *Table Talk*, p. viii.

20. See Adolph Hitler, *Le Testament politique de Hitler: Notes recueilliés par Martin Bormann*, trans. François Genoud. (Paris: Librairie Artheme Fayard, 1959). For an English translation, see *The Testament of Adolph Hitler: The Hitler-Bormann Documents with an Introduction by L. Craig Fraser* (Costa Mesa, CA: Noontide Press, 1978).

21. See Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, p. 331; Hitler, *Speeches*, pp. 1:15–16, 806ff.

# 1

# Hitler as Philosophe

A number of scholars have delineated the contours of Nazi ideology, but its place within the larger context of European intellectual history remains unclear. In his recent study of the Holocaust, for example, Arno Mayer argued that Nazism "was deeply rooted in the conservative and reactionary ideas that had surfaced in central Europe." Nazi ideology, Mayer maintained, constituted nothing less than a "wholesale rejection of the Enlightenment." In contrast, Zygmunt Bauman insisted that the Holocaust and Nazism were a product of the Enlightenment's "enthronement of the new deity, that of nature." Confronted with the apparently paradoxical character of national socialism, other scholars have tried to see it as simultaneously revolutionary and reactionary. Jeffrey Herf, for example, approvingly endorsed Thomas Mann's characterization of Nazism as a "mixture of . . . an affirmative stance toward progress combined with dreams of the past." Herf himself employed the term "reactionary modernism" to describe the phenomenon. From a very different standpoint, the French social theorist Louis Dumont developed Karl Pribam's concept of "pseudo-individualism" to argue that Nazi ideology was a tension-filled combination of traditional holism and modern individualism.[1]

## I

This inability to locate Nazism in a specific period of Western culture has helped us save the honor of that culture by suggesting that national socialism was somehow not Western after all. In other words, the impossibility of finding a specific time for Nazism has allowed us to locate it in a specific place—and that place is Germany. The association of national socialism

with an almost metaphysical conception of German culture goes back to the thirties. At a time when the Nazis themselves proclaimed the Germanic character of their ideology, Peter Viereck's *Meta-Politics* saw Hitler's movement as the consummation of a Germanic revolt against the West which had first begun at the Battle of Teutoburg Forest in 9 A.D.2

As early as 1942, Jacques Barzun condemned the thesis of transhistorical German uniqueness. Commenting on Viereck's book, Barzun noted that, reading *Meta-Politics*, "one would never know that liberal revolutions succumbed to nationalistic passions elsewhere than in Germany." Viereck, Barzun noted, "either ignores or forgets the double life . . . which every European nation has led since the Roman Empire."[3] This double life, one could argue, arose from the reality that all Western regional cultures—and not only those of German speakers—possessed the dual heritage of barbarism on the one side and Roman Christian civilization on the other. Western civilization, then, arose only with the marriage of these two heritages after the fall of the Roman Empire, and differentiated itself into various nations only during a complex process of historical development.[4]

The identification of Nazism with a transhistorical German character thus rests upon a false assumption. Western civilization has been too readily confused with Greco-Roman civilization, ignoring the equal claims of Byzantium and Islam and projecting the hated barbarian component of Western culture on something called Germany. It is precisely this view that sees the Enlightenment as the reassertion of classical civilization which the supposedly semi-barbarous Germans could only superficially experience and soon repudiated altogether. Western civilization, then, has been subjected to a false teleology, a teleology that allows the historian to see a deficiency in the Germans from the very beginning. In this context, the failures of Otto the Great, the Investiture Contest, the Thirty Years' War and German Romanticism all appear as the manifestation of a supposedly un-Western scale of values.

But if Western civilization began as a synthesis of barbarian and Roman Christian cultures, and if that synthesis took place on both sides of the Rhine, then the difference between Germany and the West becomes insignificant. The empire of Charlemagne knew no real dichotomy between the French and the Germans since this distinction arose only in the wake of the dissolution of that empire through a series of more or less fortuitous territorial divisions. No supposed "national character" predisposed Otto the Great, rather than his royal contemporary across the Rhine, to claim the title of emperor, a claim that certainly helped determine that as the West Frankish kingdom coalesced into a single state the East Frankish kingdom would devolve into many.[5] Nor was the situation in Central Europe as strange as it may appear. In the early modern period, states like Württemberg, Bavaria, Prussia and Austria went through the same process of centralization as Spain (itself composed of several smaller kingdoms) and

France, whereas Poland ultimately disintegrated. The fact that there were several smaller states and a number of statelets and independent cities in Central Europe was perceived more as a geographical curiosity than a national tragedy in what was after all a pre-nationalist culture. Throughout the West, dynastic loyalty rather than patriotism held states together. It was only with the coming of the Enlightenment and the emergence of a concept of the nation that the multiplicity of states in central Europe took on a tragic significance for those who had come to believe in something called the "German people."[6]

The project of saving the honor of the West by projecting all its faults on that people is thus not without its dangers. In particular it raises once again the old question, "What is German?" Does it mean the citizens of Germany? Then it excludes Austrians. Does it mean German speakers? Then it includes Jews. Whatever the answer, it is clear that by rooting Nazism in the "German people" we are dangerously close to a Nazi definition of just what constitutes that people. Gunter Grass has thus written that "by themselves not Prussia, not Bavaria, not even Austria could have developed the methodology and the will for organized genocide . . . it had to be all of Germany." Yet this apparently self-deprecating sentiment is a mirror image of Hitler's own belief that only Germany, and not Prussia nor Bavaria nor Austria by itself, could achieve universal greatness. Grass as much as Hitler thus wrote as if the Germans were a transhistorical phenomenon of the highest "absolute value" even if they disagreed over whether that value was in practice negative or positive. But both discourses ignore the fact that the very notion of a "German people" was more or less the creation of a specific phase in Western culture.[7]

## II

The use of the term "specific phase" suggests that the paradoxical character attributed to Nazism might arise in part from an insufficiently subtle periodization of Western culture. In other words, our tendency to regard Nazi ideas as "irrational" (as opposed to merely rational but wrong) and thus typically Germanic is connected to the way we look at Western intellectual history in general. Specifically, the paradoxical character of national socialism is greatly exaggerated by our insistence in placing it within an outmoded bifurcation of Western culture that distinguishes between tradition and modernity.

For many historians, it is true, the question of periodization is too theoretical to be of much interest. Fundamentally oriented toward empiricism, they fail to recognize that even when theory is not expressed on a conscious level it continues to exist in what might be called the cultural unconscious. Failure to develop a new periodization scheme explicitly simply means that the old schemes are implicitly retained as a set of

parameters that limit the terms of the debate. Moreover, this unwillingness to be explicit about periodization has led to a rampant impressionism among historians who use terms like "modernism" and "postmodernism" so promiscuously that their exact meaning is obscure. The result is that the old two-part model of Western intellectual history reasserts itself again and again.[8]

The question, then, is not whether we can dispense with periodization but what kind of periodization is useful on an explanatory and thus heuristic level. Using Hitlerism as a test case, its place within Western culture becomes clearer when placed within the context of a three-part as opposed to a two-part model of that culture.[9] To understand the utility of employing such a periodization scheme, we might begin by looking at two examples of it. On the one hand, David Riesman has distinguished among tradition-directed, inner-directed and other-directed societies. For Riesman, tradition-directed societies "resemble each other in their relative slowness of change" as well as "their dependence on family and kin organizations." In contrast, the inner-directed society which evolved in the West only "with the Renaissance and Reformation" was characterized by rapid growth and the emergence of a production-oriented ideology. Finally, the twentieth century has seen the formation of an extremely individualistic, consumer-oriented civilization that Riesman has characterized as "other-directed".[10] On the other hand, Traian Stoianovich has more recently distinguished between "three main forms of history—exemplar, evolutionary and functional-structural." According to Stoianovich, "most human societies that moved from mythological to historical thought retained the exemplar form until the nineteenth or twentieth century." In contrast, despite having long held this traditional conception of history, "European societies . . . discovered the developmental form . . . in the eighteenth century" and moved on to the "functional-structural approach" in the twentieth.[11]

These schemes suggest distinguishing among a traditional culture associated with feudalism and its disintegration down to the Baroque age, an Enlightenment culture which appeared around 1750 and a modern culture which emerged around the 1890s with the first signs of "globalism."[12] Within this framework, I would argue, it is possible to argue that Nazism—and especially Hitler's exposition of it—represented an attenuated and popularized form of the Enlightenment style of thought. This thesis can be demonstrated by showing that many of the apparent contradictions of Hitlerism are nothing more than the residues of a coherent Enlightenment "episteme." For the sake of brevity, I will explore just three dimensions of Hitler's thought as they relate to the Enlightenment:

1. According to Dumont, Hitlerism was composed of a forced and desperate juxtaposition of egalitarian and hierarchical concepts. On the surface of things, it does appear surprising that Hitler should mix the most rabid racism with a belief in social mobility, the call for discrimination on

the grounds of biology with the demand for careers open to talent. It is precisely this apparently careless association of a reactionary racial with a revolutionary social policy that makes Nazism appear a uniquely German construct, a crazy quilt of shoddy ideas which have no link with respectable Western history. But recent scholarship suggests that the association of biological inequality and social equality was not paradoxical at all, but was instead rooted in the historical conditions of the Enlightenment. This scholarship begins with the recognition that the traditional West tended to follow the old pattern of dividing society into three orders, the first devoted to prayer, the second to war and the third to the production and reproduction of commodities necessary to support itself as well as the other two. The primacy of this traditional pattern meant that biological distinctions were subordinated to social. But by the middle of the eighteenth century, the Enlightenment critique of the old regime led to the emancipation of the biological from the social. As a result, society was reconceptualized so that men tended to be included and women as well as subordinate races to be excluded from political life. The Enlightenment thus abolished social inequality only to reincarnate it guiltily in biological inequality. All men were indeed created equal, but not all men were men![13]

Within this context, Darwinism did not so much introduce as confront an already well-ingrained notion of biological inequality inherited from the Enlightenment. If anything, Darwin's assumption of a common organic ancestry for both sexes threatened physical inequality by introducing a more fundamental concept of organic equality based on a radical redefinition of nature itself.[14] Moreover, the emergence of a modern culture beginning at the end of the nineteenth century saw the erosion of the separate spheres constructed during the previous 150 years, further reducing the male/female dichotomy of the Enlightenment to a single sphere of action in which all sexes and races were potentially equal. It was precisely at this point that Hitler intervened with the intention of furthering the democratization of the social realm in opposition to the remnants of aristocratic caste distinction only to oppose the further democratization of the biological realm implicit in the modern culture of Weimar. Hitlerism merely revived the distinction of the separate spheres by distinguishing between a "masculine" egalitarian realm where ability implied race and a "feminine" hierarchical realm where race implied ability.[15]

2. Just as Dumont characterized Hitlerism as a juxtaposition of hierarchical and egalitarian elements, we have seen that Jeffrey Herf suggested that it was a kind of "reactionary modernism" combining a conservative idealization of nature with a revolutionary attitude toward technology. Once again, though, it was the Enlightenment itself that combined these elements by simultaneously embracing the machine and reducing it to human labor and thus nature. This was a proto-industrial as opposed to

either a pre-industrial or an industrial mode of thinking associated with an "inner-directed" culture which put a stress on increasing production.[16]

Within this framework, the classical economists of the Enlightenment began to distinguish between the productive and unproductive utilization of technology. While the distinction between productive and unproductive activity functioned in part as a critique of the feudal remnants, its precise conceptualization remained rather nebulous. Precisely what was regarded as unproductive thus varied from economist to economist. Some regarded aristocrats as unproductive, others middlemen, and still others service workers. Within this context, Marx's labor theory of value was just one more expression of the cultural assumptions of the Enlightenment, albeit an expression of great intellectual power. In particular, the Marxist system reproduced the general Enlightenment ambivalence toward the machine. On a superficial level, Marxism seemed to identify it with progress, but on a more essential level the machine could create real value only on the basis of the human labor already put into it, so that the technology owned by the capitalists was actually nothing but congealed labor and the machine owners as a class were unproductive.[17]

But by the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, the distinction between productive and unproductive activity began to disappear in economic theory with the rise of the so-called marginalists. Marginalism suggested that all economic activity was productive as long as it satisfied the wants of consumers. The emergence of a modern industrialized consumer economy thus threatened to relativize the Enlightenment's conception of technology just as it threatened to democratize its conception of biology. But, once again, it was precisely at this point that Hitler intervened by reasserting the distinction between the productive and unproductive. Hitlerism, like Marxism, traced the power of the machine to human labor and creativity. But where Marx saw that creativity as a property of the working class, Hitler merely vested it in the Aryan race. While Herf condemns Nazism for displacing the stigma of unproductiveness from the capitalist to the (Jewish) international financier, he fails to recognize that the whole notion of distinguishing between productive and unproductive activity was a problematic legacy of the Enlightenment itself.[18]

3. Another characteristic of Nazism which makes it appear simultaneously traditional and modern, and thus uniquely German, was its combination of an almost religious faith with a revolutionary secularism. But here, too, Hitler represented the continuation of an essentially Enlightenment style of thought. One of the central features of that style was the way in which its apparent this-worldliness was underpinned by quasi-religious elements in the form of a belief in some form of natural law. Underneath the potential nihilism resulting from the banishment of God from the world, the philosophes discovered the ideal of the perfect Man as the telos of history. The notion of a divine providence was thus simply replaced by that

of a secular one which revealed itself in the self-development of human history which would culminate in Man. But this transformation of God into Man also implied the similar transformation of the devil into the Anti-Man which might (although it did have to) be the Jew.

Moreover, by overthrowing *The Book of Genesis*, "the doctrine of the unity of mankind . . . was rejected in the century of the Enlightenment." A developmental hierarchy of races, nations and classes was thus established, culminating in some kind of higher type, of which Marx's proletarian, Jahn's German, Michelet's Frenchman, the Slovophiles' peasant and Wagner's Aryan were mere variations. Within this framework, which began to be challenged at the end of the nineteenth century by the more radical individualism of Darwin, Nietzsche and Freud, Hitlerism fit as snugly as a hand in a glove. On the surface, it is true, Hitler appears to have left the optimism of the Enlightenment far behind. But underlying the pessimistic struggle of all against all, he found like any philosophe a deeper law which gave him cause for optimism. This, we know, was his anti-Semitism, which marked the intersection of his populist biology and his populist economics. Hitler thus reproduced the categories of the Enlightenment in conceptualizing his notion of a titanic struggle between the masculine productive Aryan and the feminine unproductive Jew. Via Enlightenment biology and economics in an admittedly vulgarized form, national socialism secularized the traditional struggle between good and evil. It was thus not Hitler's anti-Semitism per se but the kind of anti-Semitism he practiced that is important here. For practical reasons, this anti-Semitism could function only within the theoretical space between the aristocratic culture of social inequality and the emerging "globalist" culture of biological equality. While the former would stigmatize the Jews only on a limited religious basis, the latter would call into question the very idea of "the Jew" by dissolving all collectivities into individualities with multiple elective allegiances. Only the intermediate position of the culture of the Enlightenment permitted Hitler to retain and even to intensify the Jews as a secular remnant of evil.[19]

## III

The placing of Hitlerism within its larger Enlightenment (and thus Western) context does not completely eliminate the question of that ideology's German background; it merely makes the background more recent. There could thus hardly be a German context for Hitler until the Enlightenment defined the German as an ideal type. In this sense, we can say that while the philosophes provided an older and broader framework, the nineteenth-century Germanophiles provided a more narrow and recent framework for Hitler. From the standpoint elaborated above, however, the important thing is that the Germanophiles were trying to consummate rather than negate the ideals of the Enlightenment. The real question is

precisely *when* the Germanophile vision of the ideal Man began to differentiate from its Francophile and Slavophile counterparts in a significant way. In particular, this means we need to know just when German nationalism took on the unique emphasis on race that provided the cultural context for Hitlerism, an emphasis that once again did not constitute a repudiation of the Enlightenment but merely the hypertrophy of one of its characteristics.

Unfortunately, there has long been a tendency to mark German nationalism off from other Western nationalisms *too early*. One way this has been done has been to characterize it from its earliest stages as a kind of protototalitarianism. While Dumont begins by criticizing this ghettoization of German thought, he ends up reproducing it. Thus, according to Dumont, Herder constructed a unique juxtaposition of traditional holism and modern individualism that foreshadowed Nazism. Dumont thus immediately takes away from the Germans what he sought to give them: namely, their originally normal position within Western culture. But the abnormality Dumont discovered in Herder immediately dissolves once we recognize that the Enlightenment in general was a tension-filled combination of traditionalism and modernism which cannot be reduced to either. In every case, Enlightenment ideologies underpinned individualism with holism. Thus, if the Herderian individual became free only by recognizing his identity in the *Volk*, the Rousseauean individual became free only by submitting to society and the Smithian individual only by obeying the laws of the market.[20]

Another way German nationalism has been excised from its larger context is the tendency to associate it with the notion of a Romantic rebellion against the Enlightenment. But when studied within the framework of the tripartite periodization I have been suggesting, the features associated with Romanticism appear merely as a variation of the larger pattern of eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century thought. From this standpoint, the Enlightenment itself emerges as a mixture of sentimentality and rationality. We should remember that the Enlightened phase of Western culture began as an attack on the remnants of feudalism by stigmatizing them as unnatural. Hence it is not surprising that what sometimes appeared to be a reactionary appeal to a "state of nature" was employed for revolutionary purposes. But within this context, the worship of the Roman and the Gothic should be regarded as alternative forms of the same thing. Romanticism and Neo-Classicism were thus both forms of the Enlightenment's revolt against the unnatural culture of the Baroque. Understood this way, Romanticism as a historical category dissolves, and with it the notion of a Romantic German nationalism as a revolt against the Enlightenment.[21]

In many ways, then, German nationalism remained "Herderian" until 1848, but in the years after the Frankfurt Assembly, it became increasingly obvious that *Mitteleuropa* was unable to conform to the demands of the nationalist model. Moreover, the notion of a German *Volk* was contested by

German-speaking aristocrats and workers alike. The postponement of the founding of a genuine German nation-state thus led to a situation in which the so-called volkish nationalists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century constructed a revised ideology, not by repudiating the Enlightenment but by recombining its elements in a new way. In brief, the idea of liberty, equality and fraternity was merely transformed into that of fraternity, equality and liberty so that the stress shifted from cultural to racial nationalism. It was within this context that Hitler appeared as a kind of latter-day philosophe who simultaneously attacked the dying aristocratic culture of Prussia and the emerging modernist culture of the Bauhaus. Hitler thus took up and popularized what were essentially Enlightenment values even if they were hardly recognizable. A revolutionary who asserted the idea of a natural law of human perfectibility in opposition to the older idea of a divine resolution of history, he was in turn a reactionary who abhorred the temporal-spatial relativism inherent in the emerging culture of twentieth-century globalism. In a sense he was a conservative, but the idea he conserved was that of revolutionary progress. Whether he spoke as a fascist, a racist or an anti-Semite, Hitler was fighting an ideological two-front war against a reactionary past and a revolutionary future. But in a society where the middle classes had apparently turned their back on the Enlightenment by allying themselves with the aristocracy and the workers had transcended the Enlightenment by their dalliance with the bohemian left, the way was open for national socialism to take up the cause of the Frankfurt Assembly in a new form. Even on the level of practical politics, Hitler could function only in the historical space between the dying culture of social inequality and the emerging culture of biological equality, since the former would preclude a nobody from coming to power while the latter would threaten power itself by extending the democratic model to its furthest limits.

## IV

The attempt to recast Hitler as a philosophe will inevitably give rise to many objections. The charge will be raised that I am attempting some sort of rehabilitation of Hitlerism. But the recognition that Hitler's ideas have a place within the larger intellectual history of the West should do less to raise our opinion of the former as to lower our opinion of the latter. And this is as it should be. Any just assessment of Western civilization must recognize that the extreme dynamism of its cultural life, especially in its Enlightenment phase, has been a two-edged sword sometimes in the service of good and sometimes in the service of evil. Moreover, in their *overidealization* of the philosophes, historians have created what are in effect "false problems." In particular, by identifying the Enlightenment project with such notions as "reason" and "freedom," they have missed the complexity of that project

so that many of its sequelae appear as revolts against it. Emphasizing the philosophes' stress on liberty and equality, historians have tended to downplay their equal emphasis on fraternity and the tendency toward exclusiveness latent within it. But the Enlightenment, as I have delineated it above, was by no means a completely emancipatory project, and its de-emancipatory features should not be projected on something called "Germany."

## NOTES

1. Arno Mayer, *Why Did the Heavens Not Darken? The "Final Solution" in History* (New York: Pantheon, 1990), pp. 90–91; Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 69–71; Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Culture and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 2; Louis Dumont, *Essays in Individualism: Modern Ideology in Anthropological Perspective* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), pp. 149–79. Also see Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of the Enlightenment* (New York: Continuum, 1988). For the classic discussions of Hitler's personal ideology, see Eberhard Jäckel, *Hitler's World View: A Blueprint for Power* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), and Ernst Nolte, *Three Faces of Fascism: Action Française, Italian Fascism, National Socialism* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), pp. 275–425. Also helpful are Stanley Payne, *Fascism: Comparison and Definition* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980), pp. 11, 99; Eugen Weber, *The Varieties of Fascism: Doctrines of Revolution in the Twentieth Century* (Malabar: Krieger, 1982); David Schoenbaum, *Hitler's Social Revolution: Class and Status in Nazi Germany, 1933–1939* (New York: Norton, 1966); and Barrington Moore, *The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (Boston: Beacon, 1966).

2. Peter Viereck, *Meta-Politics: The Roots of the Nazi Mind* (New York: Capricorn, 1966), pp. 10–15.

3. Ibid., pp. 347–51.

4. See Lawrence Birken, "What Is Western Civilization?", *The History Teacher* 25 (August 1992): pp. 451–61.

5. For a summary of the development of early central Europe, see Donald Detwiler, *Germany: A Short History* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989), pp. 11–35.

6. Historians often treat the Holy Roman Empire as a potential German state that never unified, forgetting that the empire's universalist claims technically put its Bavarian and other great vassals on the same level with any other European *king*. In other words, the HRE was not so much the embryo of a medieval German state as the shrunken vestige of a universal Western empire. For an example of how one of the smaller states of *Mitteleuropa* passed through an evolution similar to that of the larger Western states, see James A. Vann, *The Making of a State: Württemberg, 1593–1793* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984), pp. 17–23.

7. Compare Gunter Grass, *Two States—One Nation* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1990), pp. 122–23, with Hitler, *The Speeches of Adolph Hitler*, translated by Norman Baynes (London: Oxford University Press, 1942), p. 1:90.

8. A perfect example of the durability of the traditional/modern duality is the way it reappears in the work of Michel Foucault. In his iconoclastic *Order of Things* Foucault elaborated a fresh new way of periodizing Western culture by distinguishing among Renaissance, classical and modern incarnations of that culture. Criticized for emphasizing the discontinuity among these periods, he eventually abandoned this scheme altogether, replacing it with a strangely familiar one. In two of his most influential books, *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault elaborated the distinction between a "right of death" practiced by the old and a "power over life" practiced by what was in effect the new regime. While the former tortured its most incorrigible subjects, the latter found subtler ways to control them. But if Foucault seemed to be replacing an all too reductionist emphasis on historical discontinuity with a new stress on continuity, the net effect of reducing the complex periodization of *The Order of Things* to a simple dichotomy between the culture of death and that of life was to sharpen the sense of discontinuity between them. The lesson here is that by abandoning his original scheme, Foucault was unable to eliminate its discontinuous (and thus reductionist) character since that character is implicit in any kind of periodization. Unable to abandon periodization, he merely reinstated it in the universal distinction between a traditional and a modern order reminiscent of the historical manicheanism of Marxism and modernization theory. See Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage, 1973); *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage, 1979), 3–31; and *The History of Sexuality* (New York: Vintage, 1980), pp. 1:135–59.

9. See the model developed in Lawrence Birken, *Consuming Desire: Sexual Science and the Emergence of a Culture of Abundance, 1871–1914* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988).

10. David Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd: A Study in the Changing American Character* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1950), p. 13.

11. Traian Stoianovich, *French Historical Method: The Annales Paradigm* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1976), p. 25.

12. Something should be said about the fact that just as Enlightenment culture took several decades to diffuse fully among the masses, modernist culture has also taken a good deal of time to achieve a wide diffusion in mass culture. Consequently, Enlightenment ideals may even have been more attractive to Hitler's mass following than they were to some intellectuals.

13. See Dumont, *Essays in Individualism*, pp. 175–77; Traian Stoianovich, "Gender and Family: Myths, Models and Ideologies," *The History Teacher* 15 (November 1981): pp. 69–119; Birken, *Consuming Desire*, pp. 6, 72–73n.

14. Birken, *Consuming Desire*, pp. 7–8.

15. Ibid., pp. 122–27.

16. For a full discussion of the specificity of the proto-industrial epoch, see ibid., pp. 113–17.

17. Marx's attitude toward the machine and technology in general is discussed in John Sherwood, "Engels, Marx, Malthus and the Machine," *American Historical Review* 90 (October 1985): pp. 837–65.

18. Even Hitler's attempt to unite "Aryan" capitalists and workers represents a racist analog to older Utopian Socialist and Utilitarian ideas which sought to reconcile operatives and bosses and place them in opposition to the old aristocracy

or middlemen. But see Herf, *Reactionary Modernism*, pp. 189–95, with its more specifically "German" interpretation.

19. Léon Poliakov, *The Aryan Myth: A History of Racist and Nationalist Ideas in Europe* (Sussex: Sussex University Press, 1974), p. 175.

20. See Dumont, *Essays on Individualism*, especially pp. 113, 118, 175, where he notes that Herder's "holism must be seen as contained within the individualism he fiercely attacks," thus making the gentle Herder the precursor of Hitler whose "racism results . . . from the holistic representation of community disintegrating under the action of individualism."

21. The great historian of ideas Arthur Lovejoy admitted that the term "Romanticism" embraced numerous contradictory ideas without taking the further step of questioning whether the term is useful at all. From the perspective of this essay, it's hard not to wonder whether the use of the concept of "Romanticism" represents an unconscious or subliminal process of excising German culture from its larger Western context. But see Arthur Lovejoy, "On the Discrimination of Romanticisms," in his *Essays in the History of Ideas* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1948), pp. 228–53.

# 2

# Volkish Nationalism in Perspective

In the last chapter I suggested that the relationship between the Enlightenment and German nationalism appears to be a paradoxical one. While most historians recognize that the idea of the nation was an implicit part of the Enlightenment project, these same historians dismiss the more extreme, or "volkish," forms of German nationalism that developed in the second half of the nineteenth century as a revolt against that project. The problem is complicated by the fact that fin de siècle champions of the *Volk* were themselves convinced that they were repudiating the ideals of the Enlightenment. But are we to take them at their word on this point when we reject their arguments on so many other points? What is at work here, one suspects, is the desire by both volkish thinkers *and* their critics to excise the German experience from Western civilization in general. In this chapter, I want to present an alternative perspective by further developing the argument that the significance of volkish nationalism may be better understood by regarding it not as a repudiation but an intensification of Enlightenment—and thus of Western—values.[1]

## I

According to Elie Kedourie, nationalism was "invented in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century."[2] It was the philosophes who de-sacralized the world, replacing the idea of a king whose powers were derived from a transcendent deity with the notion of a people whose rights were deduced from an immanent nature. Before the political and intellectual upheavals of the late eighteenth century, there were no European nation-states as we understand them, but merely dynastic entities, each a collection

of provinces tied together by loyalty to a common ruler. But when the ideas of the philosophes implicitly and the deeds of the revolutionaries explicitly replaced God and king with nature and people, there had to be a new principle that could define and hold that people together. Just as the Enlightenment rejected the notion of a transcendent divine in favor of an immanent natural law, it came to reject the idea of political organization from above in favor of the concept of natural organization "from below" based on a sense of common character. Liberty and equality thus implied fraternity.[3]

As I have suggested above, pre-nineteenth-century Central Europe was not as unique as it sometimes seems to have been. From a *dynastic* standpoint, Prussia and Austria were as viable as France or Russia. In a monograph published in 1984, James A. Vann demonstrated how even little Württemberg possessed "an administrative structure that reflected in microcosm those of the larger European states."[4] When textbook writers like Marvin Perry, Thomas Greer and Gavin Lewis speak of the early modern "failure to unify Germany" or the fact that "dynastic (family) considerations, more than concern for national feeling, guided the politics of central Europe" during the Reformation period, they forget that these conditions prevailed more or less throughout the West until 1789. It would be hard to imagine either Maria Theresa or Frederick the Great mourning over German disunity when their policies did everything to encourage it.[5] Only with the generalization of the Enlightenment and its revolutionary project under Napoleon did some Germans begin to despair over the political fragmentation of what *now* appeared to be a common people. Only then did the creation of a German national state in Central Europe become increasingly problematic.

While implicit in the theoretical writings of Herder and explicit in Fichte, the practical difficulties of creating such a state first became apparent in the Frankfurt Assembly of 1848–49. Clearly modeling themselves on the French National Assembly which emerged out of the Estates General in June 1789, the middle-class representatives at Frankfurt naively believed that the extension of liberty and equality would ensure fraternity. It was in this sense that they were "liberals." But the men of Frankfurt were also faced with problems both quantitatively and qualitatively more difficult than those faced by proponents of national unification elsewhere. In other words, while not unique in the dynastic epoch, the German situation did become in a certain sense unique in the age of the nation-state. Middle-class advocates of German unification not only faced the recalcitrant aristocracies and alienated lower classes found elsewhere, but also had to grapple with several problems peculiar to Central Europe. The existence of two rival centers of power in Berlin and Vienna, the division between a Protestant north and a Catholic south, the lack of natural boundaries, as well as the diaspora-like pattern of German settlement in the east, all stood in the way

of the consolidation of what Ernst Nolte called a "normal Western Bourgeois National State."[6]

This was the framework within which the so-called *kleindeutsch*, *grossdeutsch* and *Mitteleuropa* solutions to the "German problem" evolved at Frankfurt, the first calling for "the complete exclusion of Austria from the German state," the second for the inclusion of German Austria and the third for the inclusion of the entire Austrian Empire, Prussia and the German statelets in a vast multinational polity. Now there has been a tendency to regard these solutions merely as strategic alternatives, thus putting them on equal footing. William Carr has therefore argued that "not one of these solutions was national in the modern sense of including only German speakers under one roof," ignoring the fact that *all* European nation-states inevitably have minorities.[7]

Instead, I should like to make the argument that *only* the *grossdeutsch* solution represented an effort to realize thoroughly the Enlightenment ideal of a nation based on a naturally constituted people. In contrast, the *kleindeutsch* and *Mitteleuropa* schemes were mere devices designed to preserve the interests of, respectively, the Hohenzollerns and the Hapsburgs. Put simply, the *grossdeutsch* plan would have made Prussia "too big" from the Hohenzollern point of view and Austria "too small" from the Hapsburg perspective. Moreover, both Hohenzollern Prussia and Hapsburg Austria would have had to subordinate dynastic interests to the idea of national interest implicit in the notion of a *grossdeutsch* state. For precisely this reason, however, the first instinct of the Frankfurt Assembly was to demand such a state, the other solutions being merely *faut de mieux*. It can be argued, of course, that all three of the alternatives presented at Frankfurt were ultimately unacceptable to the rival dynasties since the very act of receiving a new crown from a "national assembly" would have advanced the notion of popular sovereignty. But even if this were so, the *grossdeutsch* solution was doubly unacceptable since it completely subordinated the dynastic to the national ideal. Betrayed by the dynasties and abandoned by the increasingly alienated lower classes, the Frankfurt Assembly became irrelevant even before it was dissolved in 1849.[8]

## II

The failure of Frankfurt meant that the "German problem" could be solved only by the rival Hohenzollerns and Hapsburgs, neither of whom wanted a German nation-state. Whoever won the struggle between Austria and Prussia, which culminated in the Austro-Prussian War of 1866, was unlikely to establish a *Grossdeutschland*. Within this context, it is not surprising that Bismarck deliberately spared—and indeed helped preserve—the Austrian Empire. In his *Memoirs*, Bismarck suggested a number of military reasons to justify his policy, implying that the annexation of even part of

Austria would have led to a general European conflict. But in passing he admitted that "German Austria we could neither wholly or partly make use of . . . Vienna could not be governed from Berlin as a mere dependency."[9]

Reading between the lines, one must conclude along with Herbert Michaelis that Bismarck's "deed was to rescue Prussian monarchial absolutism, whose time in history had expired, to preserve it in a greatly altered world."[10] When he came to power in 1862, Bismarck had three options. He might have left Prussia as it was, defeated Austria in order to pave the way for a *Kleindeutschland* or destroyed Austria and created a *Grossdeutschland*. But the first option would have given the initiative to the Hapsburgs by leaving Prussia too small to play a significant role in European affairs, while the third option would have made Prussia too big by drowning it in a sea of Germans held together not by allegiance to an alien dynasty but only by their common nationality. If Bismarck ultimately took the *kleindeutsch* option, it was, as David Calleo suggests, because it alone made Prussia big enough to preserve the Hohenzollerns without making it so big that it destroyed them.[11]

From what amounted to a political "maximization problem," all of Bismarck's other policies can be deduced. By deliberately limiting the size of the Hohenzollern domains, he was forced to supplement lack of territory with trade and diplomacy. The conservative character of Bismarck's program was above all evident in his attitude toward the Austrian Empire. While Calleo has argued that "a close bilateral alliance with Austria clearly ran counter to Bismarck's earlier strategy" since "it pointed to a German hegemonic bloc in Central Europe," the fact was that in order to preserve the *kleindeutsch* state Austria had to be kept intact. If the Hapsburg Empire had fallen apart, its German provinces would have inevitably been drawn to unite with the Hohenzollern territories in a *Grossdeutschland*. Moreover, preserving Austria meant the conservation of the dynastic principle championed by Bismarck. The Hapsburgs thus became the Hohenzollerns' junior partners in the last quarter of the nineteenth century in what appeared to be a mutually beneficial alliance. But in one sense Calleo is right to draw attention to the ironic character of the Bismarckian system; in order to preserve the *kleindeutsch* state, it was necessary to create what was in effect the *Mitteleuropa* option that France and Russia feared the most.[12]

But if Bismarck's counterfeit *Reich* had the local characteristics of *Kleindeutschland* and the international characteristics of *Mitteleuropa*, the question is why that *Reich* was considered a nation-state. As John Breuilly has noted, Bismarck's "achievements of 1866–67 could, from a 'national' perspective, be better described as a *division* rather than a unification," and the accomplishments of 1870–71 were just as problematic.[13] Perhaps his greatest success was to create the impression that in 1871 something called "Germany" was united. Carr has alluded to the superior "propaganda machine created by the *kleindeutsch* advocates" even before Bismarck came

to power. Bismarck's genius for co-opting his enemies also played a role here. If he achieved for Central what Metternich had failed to achieve for all Europe, it was because Bismarck had the tactical sense to dress up ancient institutions in modern form, throwing out tidbits to the middle and even the working classes when necessary. Finally, there was the prestige of success. Having triumphed in the age of nationalism, the *kleindeutsch* state was taken as a nation-state. The living proof of Bismarck's genius in this area is the fact that historians almost universally speak of German and Italian unification in the same breath, when they were in fact two very different phenomena.[14]

## III

In his brilliant study of German ideology, George Mosse provided the standard delineation of volkish thought, beginning with the definition of the term *Volk* itself. *Volk*, Mosse explained "is a much more comprehensive term than 'people' . . . to German thinkers since the birth of German Romanticism in the late eighteenth century." A case can be made, however, that Mosse overemphasized the uniqueness of the concept of *Volk* in its late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century incarnation just as he overemphasized the uniqueness of the German commitment to Romanticism and idealism which appeared to be component parts of volkish ideology.[15] Calleo, for one, has attacked the notion that either the Romantic or the idealist vision is particularly German. In the end, one could conclude that vague terms like Romanticism and idealism allow us to stigmatize anything we do not like about the Enlightenment and the core Western values it is supposed to have represented as uniquely German. For example, Mosse noted that "according to many volkish theorists, the nature of a *Volk* is determined by the native landscape." But such a perspective hardly represents a uniquely German idealism or Romanticism, but rather can be understood within the context of widely dispersed Enlightenment notions of climatic determinism.[16]

While each language has its own nuances so that there will always be a difference between the German *Volk* and, say, the French *peuple* and the Russian *narod*, I suspect that Mosse made a mistake in attributing to the German word of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century the sinister connotations it would take on later. Let us assume, for the sake of argument, that during the French Revolutionary era *Volk* had a meaning not that much different from our notion of "people." We are then able to suggest that it was only in the course of the nineteenth century that the German word gradually took on the peculiarly "biological" connotation with which we are so familiar. We are thus talking not so much about the repudiation as about the transformation of the Enlightenment notion of a

"people," a transformation that took place within the context of the Germans' inability to construct a genuine nation-state.

While all European nationalism became increasingly intense in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, volkish nationalism clearly did stress racial or biological similarity to a greater extent than other rival doctrines. Why? The standard answer seems to be that volkish thought represented an "excess" of nationalism. "Bismarck's triumphs," Marvin Perry tells us, "lured Germans into a dreamworld." But this analysis is faulty since it ignores the fundamentally dynastic and thus pre-nationalist character of the *kleindeutsch* regime. Bismarck's actions from 1866 to 1871 had preserved what was in effect a counterfeit nationalism from above into a time that saw the emergence of a working-class internationalism from below. It was the old story of 1848 all over again, with the upper classes opposing and the lower classes ignoring the nationalist ideal. Caught between the pseudo-nationalism of the Prussian monarchy and the internationalism of the Social Democrats, the cultural *Grossdeutschland* of Frankfurt was gradually transformed into the racial *Grossdeutschland* of the fin de siècle Germanophiles. Volkish thought, in other words, was not so much a result of as a stand-in for German unification.[17]

On the surface, of course, the racial nationalism of the volkish ideologues may seem like a self-conscious rejection of the vision of Frankfurt and thus the Enlightenment. But a deeper analysis shows a certain continuity between the *grossdeutsch* ideals of 1848 and the racial nationalist beliefs of, say, 1888. To start with, racism was a creation rather than a repudiation of the Enlightenment. Léon Poliakov has clearly demonstrated this in *The Aryan Myth* by showing that the philosophes' rejection of *The Book of Genesis* led them to search for new genealogies based on racial differences which undermined the biblical belief in the unity of humankind. Moreover, in an article in *The History Teacher*, Traian Stoianovich has illustrated how the Enlightenment replaced the three social orders based on functional with two biological orders founded on organic differences. This research underscores my earlier assertion that the philosophes tabooed the idea of social inequality only to reincarnate it in the notion of biological inequality.[18]

If the formulation of the Aryan was, as Poliakov has suggested, a legacy of the Enlightenment, it could nevertheless be harnessed to conservative forces in countries like France and Russia where it was possible to conceive of the aristocracy as a Germanic master race ruling over an indigenous peasantry. But for German nationalists, as Hanna Arendt pointed out, "race-thinking was invented to unite the people" and "actually excluded the nobility with their notorious cosmopolitan relations." Arendt, however, implied that this was a characteristic of German nationalism almost from the very beginning, ignoring the cultural nationalism that predominated at Frankfurt even among the most convinced *Grossdeutschers*. The real genius of the late-nineteenth-century volkish nationalists was to combine two

Enlightenment concepts, namely racism and nationalism, which had theretofore been separate. Racism, for the most part, had been directed outward against the victims of European aggression on other continents, while nationalism had been an intra-European affair. The volkish nationalists' great "achievement" was to direct racism against other Europeans as a means of uniting the German people after both Frankfurt and Bismarck had failed to do so.[19]

Of course, the volkish intelligentsia suffered from a kind of cultural manic-depression, their boasting about German racial superiority alternating with their despair over German political inferiority. But they were nevertheless the heirs to the Enlightenment project of replacing a transcendent deity with an immanent nature and thus a divinely appointed king with a naturally constituted people. The hypothesis of race merely provided a more up-to-date way of demonstrating that natural constitution. To be sure, this involved a subtle rearrangement (as opposed to repudiation) of Enlightenment values. Where the early-nineteenth-century liberals apparently stressed liberty and equality over fraternity, the late nineteenth century Germanophiles clearly stressed fraternity over liberty and equality.

Within this context, the place of anti-Semitism within volkish thought should become clearer. It is, of course, a great mistake to see anti-Semitism as a rejection of Enlightenment values. On the contrary, the Enlightenment simply secularized rather than destroyed traditional Judeophobia. Indeed, there was a sense in which the notion of fraternity was implicitly more dangerous to the Jews as Jews than was the older idea of estate society. While the latter tolerated the Jewish religion, the former demanded assimilation as the price of tolerance. In other words, the liberal nation-state was willing to emancipate the Jews only insofar as they emancipated themselves from their own Jewishness (Marx). The only alternative, not formulated for some time, was for the Jews to constitute their own nation-state. Nationalism thus demanded that the Jews either be absorbed into the social body or be rejected as parasites precisely because the ideal of fraternity demanded solidarity. In contrast, both dynastic pseudo-nationalism and working-class internationalism accepted the notion of some kind of German-Jewish symbiosis.[20]

If volkish thought represented the transformation of liberal into racial nationalism, it also implied a transformation of liberal into racial anti-Semitism. This transmutation was particularly significant since it closed off the option of Jewish assimilation, leaving only the notion of Jewish parasitism. Conversely, from the volkish perspective both the Bismarckian *Reich* and the Social Democratic Party appeared more or less philo-Semitic in the sense that they each recognized the possibilities of the kind of symbiosis between Germans and Jews embodied in the careers of Gerson Bleichroder and Eduard Bernstein.[21]

While anti-Semitism was in some ways worse in both France and Russia than it was in Central Europe, it was the *kind* of anti-Semitism implicit in

volkish thought that was ominous. To be sure, we can hardly blame the Germans alone for the notion of the parasite, especially since it was rooted in the general Enlightenment distinction between productive and unproductive activity, which was itself merely a secularization of the old Christian opposition between a creative God and a sterile devil. Opposing both a pseudo-nationalist Prussia and an internationalist Social Democracy which were apparently equally committed to the notion of Jewish symbiosis, volkish thought sought to strengthen *German* nationalism by stigmatizing the Jew as parasite. But the volkish dream of expelling the parasitical Jew was nothing more than the desire to purge the Germans of "Jewish" characteristics. Like the Jews, the Germans were simultaneously a chosen and a cursed people, existing both everywhere and nowhere, living in many states but possessing no real nation-state. The very similarities between Germans and Jews which volkish ideology unexpectedly revealed thus necessitated the positing of a monstrous difference between them.[22]

## IV

The perspective outlined above may provide a new context for examining the volkish thinkers of the second half of the nineteenth century, of whom the great composer Richard Wagner was perhaps the most notorious example. On the surface, Wagner's life appears paradoxical. Regarded as the enemy of the Enlightenment and a late Romantic, he nevertheless supported the Revolution of 1848. Commenting on Wagner's 1850 essay "Judaism in Music," Jacob Katz noted that "the concept of race, which Wagner later utilized, did not serve . . . as a distinctive feature for characterizing the Jews."[23] In contrast, Leon Stein suggested that the race concept was already present in "Judaism in Music." What I have said above may help settle this controversy. It would appear that Wagner's later ideas did not represent a repudiation so much as an intensification of the revolutionary notions he held in 1848. What was basically a liberal nationalism and cultural anti-Semitism was gradually "biologized" in the decades following the failure of Frankfurt. Wagner is indeed an example of someone who created a racial *Grossdeutschland* on a plane somehow "higher" than the merely political.[24]

Within this context, it is Wagner, more than either Bismarck or Nietzsche, who was the real heir to the Enlightenment. Where Bismarck merely dressed up a pre-Enlightenment dynasticism in nationalist clothing, Nietzsche expressed what was in effect a post-Enlightenment philosophy that wished to dissolve nationalism into a world of radically authentic individuals. Wagner thus occupied the theoretical space between Prussian traditionalism on the one side and existentialist relativism on the other. Idealizing neither God nor the individual, Wagnerism upheld the collective mystique of the *Volk*. Even Wagner's attempt to "Germanize" Christianity

fits into the larger Enlightenment project of securing a secular substitute for salvation without destroying the notion of salvation itself. Wagnerism harked back to the Jacobin dream of creating a national religion founded on the cult of Nature. It was thus no accident that Wagner's ideas were so offensive to Bismarck and Nietzsche alike, both of whom were in their own way "good Europeans" hostile to the nationalist implications of volkish thought.[25]

## NOTES

1. See Lawrence Birken, "What Is Western Civilization?," 25:4 (August 1992) pp. 51–61.

2. Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism* (New York: Praeger, 1960), p. 9; also quoted in John Breuilly, ed., *The State of Germany: The National Ideal in the Making, Unmaking and Remaking of a Modern Nation-State* (London and New York: Longman, 1992), p. 2.

3. For the distinction between "transcendent" and "immanent," see Lawrence Birken, *Consuming Desire: Sexual Science and the Emergence of a Culture of Abundance, 1871–1914* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), pp. 3–11.

4. James A. Vann, *The Making of a State: Württemberg, 1593–1793* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984), p. 19; and see Mary Fulbrook, *The Divided Nation: A History of Germany, 1918–1990* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 4–5, for a general warning against reading German history backward.

5. Marvin Perry, *Western Civilization: A Brief History*, 2d ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1993), p. 253; Thomas Greer and Galvin Lewis, *A Brief History of the Western World*, 6th ed. (Ft. Worth: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1992), p. 316.

6. Ernst Nolte, *Three Faces of Fascism: Action Française, Italian Fascism, National Socialism* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), p. 301.

7. William Carr, "The Unification of Germany," in Breuilly, ed., *The State of Germany*, pp. 88–89; Carr himself makes this point in his *History of Germany, 1815–1945* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979), p. 48.

8. Carr, *History of Germany*, p. 50.

9. Bismarck, *The Memoirs* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1966), pp. 2:50–51.

10. Herbert Michaelis in Otto Pflanze, ed., *The Unification of Germany: 1848–1871* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), p. 113.

11. David Calleo, *The German Problem Reconsidered: Germany and the World Order, 1870 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 11.

12. Ibid., p. 17. The problem here may be that Calleo tends to conflate the *grossdeutsch* and *Mitteleuropa* options delineated by Carr.

13. See Breuilly, ed., *The State of Germany*, p. 12.

14. Ibid., p. 90.

15. George Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1964), pp. 4–5, 8–10.

16. See Calleo, *German Problem*, pp. 3, 146–57, esp. p. 153; Mosse, *German Ideology*, pp. 4–5.

17. Perry, *Western Civilization*, p. 425.

18. Léon Poliakov, *The Aryan Myth: A History of Racist and Nationalist Ideas in Europe* (Sussex: Sussex University Press, 1974), pp. 144–45, 169, 175, 273; Traian Stoianovich, "Gender and Family: Myths, Models and Ideologies," *The History Teacher* 15 (November 1981): pp. 69–119.

19. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1979), pp. 165–70; Poliakov, *Aryan Myth*, pp. 30–31, 78–79, 84–85, 106–7, 126–27.

20. See Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), pp. 52–53; Arendt, *Totalitarianism*, pp. 11–35, provides an important analysis of the early stages of anti-Semitism as opposed to Judeophobia; Jacob Katz, *The Darker Side of Genius: Richard Wagner's Anti-Semitism* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1986), pp. 5–19.

21. For a discussion of symbiosis and parasitism as metaphors for German-Jewish relations, see L. J. Rather, *Reading Wagner: A Study in the History of Ideas* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 1990), pp. 179–85.

22. In other words, the Enlightenment created the conditions for Germans to recognize the diaspora-like characteristics of their political situation, a situation made ever more apparent by the failure of 1848–49 and 1866–71 to create a real Germany. The tendency to project hatred upon objects similar to oneself is an example of what Sigmund Freud once called the "narcissism of minor differences." Freud himself thus noted that it was no "unaccountable chance that the dream of a Germanic world-dominion called for antisemitism as its complement." See Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (New York: Norton, 1961), pp. 61–62.

23. Katz, *The Darker Side of Genius*, p. 42.

24. Leon Stein, *The Racial Thinking of Richard Wagner* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1950), p. 105. More recently, the "Germanic" aspects of Wagner's thought have been re-emphasized by Paul Lawrence Rose in his *Wagner: Race and Revolution* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1992).

25. For Wagner in the broader context of volkish ideology, see Rodrick Stackelberg, *Idealism Debased: From Volkish Ideology to National Socialism* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1981), pp. 9–11, and Robert Anchor, *Germany Confronts Modernization: German Culture and Society, 1790–1890* (Toronto and London: Heath, 1972), pp. 120–22.

# 3

# Hitlerism in Historical Context

The triumph of racial nationalism, let alone Hitlerism, was by no means inevitable. The establishment of a *Grossdeutschland* in 1866 would have almost certainly taken the wind out of the volkish sails. Even Bismarck's *Reich* might have gradually evolved a solution to the "German question" if its founding principles had been honored by the Iron Chancellor's successors. Unfortunately, this was not to be. In retrospect, the great tragedy of the Wilhelmine era was that a conservative dynastic realm based on pseudo-nationalist foundations began to act like a "normal bourgeois nation state" without the territorial foundation necessary to sustain such a state.

## I

Bismarck, like Nietzsche, was a good European ultimately hostile to untrammeled nationalism. The *Kleindeutschland* meant that territory was deliberately limited in order to maximize the power of the Prussian monarchy. As I have suggested, a policy of trade and diplomacy thus replaced one of territorial expansion.[1] In the last decades of the nineteenth century, however, the wisdom of both Bismarck and Nietzsche was ignored as the German Empire sought to take its place among European nations in the struggle for world power. This fateful shift from a policy of limits to one of *Weltpolitik* was connected to the apparent spread of nationalism beyond its middle-class base in two directions: downward into the working classes and upward into the aristocracy. Rivalry with other European states practically necessitated that the ideal of fraternity be embraced by all the citizens of the *Reich*. For Germany to "strut and fret" upon a world stage, its people had to believe in it.[2]

But this fin de siècle nationalism was in many ways superficial. It was in fact an essentially "negative" nationalism, subject to certain conditions and easily revocable. Outside of the volkish fanatics, both the German aristocracy and working classes remained only "partially" nationalized. The ambivalent attitude toward nationalism was most evident among the German workers, where it was embodied in the politics of the Social Democratic Party. Founded in 1869, the SDP was from the start a contradictory institution. Ideologically, it remained dedicated to the ideals of universal class struggle and thus internationalism. Practically, it was committed to working within an increasingly nationalist political system. A Marxist parliamentary party was technically a contradiction in terms. But the SDP was only partially Marxist, having long succumbed to a Bernsteinean revisionism which replaced the class struggle against the industrial order with the struggle to secure higher wages within that order. With greater prosperity, workers within the *Reich* were likely to come to think of themselves as Germans first and workers second. The problem was that this nationalism was conditional upon continued prosperity. Any worsening in economic conditions was thus likely to revoke what was in effect a superficial patriotism, activating the latent internationalism (or perhaps antinationalism) of the workers.[3]

At the same time, the aristocracy was also only superficially nationalized. The army in particular remained a state within a state, less loyal to the German nation than to the Prussian monarchy. While the successes of the German *Reich* at the end of the nineteenth century created the conditions for the eventual "nationalization" of the army, political and military failure was likely to revoke this superficial nationalism and activate the army's latent dynastic character.

What was in effect a partial "nationalization" of both the army and the SDP was ultimately contingent upon the geopolitical expansion of Wilhelmine Germany. But could such an expansion go on indefinitely? It might have, if Germany had had a sufficient territorial base. But Bismarck's deliberate refusal to secure such a base from 1866 to 1871 made Wilhelmine expansionism ultimately impossible. The fact was that Wilhelm II's Germany was like a weight lifter with a huge upper body and skinny legs. After 1890, the *Reich* had a *grossdeutsch* foreign policy with a *kleindeutsch* foundation. What was in effect an eighteenth-century monarchy, artificially preserved by Bismarck into a new age, had abandoned the policy of limits designed for it and was now pursuing the expansionist policies of a "normal bourgeois nation state." The *Reich* thus exemplified one of those geopolitical "pyramids stood on their heads" that Hitler later alluded to in *Mein Kampf*.[4]

The problem with Bismarck's system of alliances was that it required Germany to remain static. The dynamic German Empire of the last years of the nineteenth century quickly outgrew the limits of Bismarckian policy

and threw Russia and France into a panic. The difficulty was that while "little" Germany was becoming the single most powerful state on the Continent, it was not more powerful than all the other states combined as a "greater" Germany might have been. The German *Reich* thus created a problem, but one for which there was a clear solution: namely, the anti-German alliance between France and Russia of 1894. While Germany's colonial policy was a natural outgrowth of its attempt to transform itself into a "normal" European nation-state, it only provoked Britain to join France and Russia at the beginning of the twentieth century. If this was not enough, the United States, reversing its hundred-year tradition of Anglophobia, was drawing closer to the British Empire.[5]

Bismarck had inadvertently created a Germany strong enough to attract enemies but not strong enough to intimidate them. Moreover, he had deliberately preserved the Hapsburg Empire as Germany's only dependable ally. But Austria was an ally worse than an enemy. A multinational realm in an age of rapid nationalism, with its restless minorities seething in revolt, the Hapsburg Empire was a dinosaur state. The Hapsburgs were also the remnants of a more cosmopolitan age who could not cope with the increasingly shrill hyper-nationalism of the fin de siècle. If Bismarck had destroyed the empire in 1866, he might have faced a European war then. By preserving it, he prepared the way for an infinitely greater war in 1914.[6]

Within the context of Germany's increasing isolation in the first decade of the twentieth century, the German military's war plans look more understandable. Germany and Austria were surrounded by powerful enemies. If war came, it would inevitably come from two directions. From the German perspective, then, any possible war had to be waged in the most aggressive and ruthless way possible. Thus, the notorious Schlieffen Plan, which proposed a quick but overwhelming attack on France via neutral Belgium followed by an advance against Russia; the general staff preferred to fight two wars in succession instead of fighting them simultaneously. An even more radical solution was an out and out preventive war, advocated by some military leaders.[7] But even if the notion of a preventive war was ultimately rejected, German strategy came close to demanding it anyway. The trick was to mobilize quickly enough to surprise everyone else, but not so quickly that Germany started a war it didn't really want to fight.

## II

When war came in August 1914, provoked (but not caused) by the assassination of Franz Ferdinand six weeks earlier, no one nation had so much to gain from a quick and decisive war as imperial Germany. To be sure, at the beginning war united the Germans as never before. The proletarian SDP stood shoulder to shoulder with the aristocratic general staff as the Reichstag proclaimed the *Burgfriede*, or "civil peace." Moreover, the

German military believed that an eventual showdown was inevitable anyway. War appeared the only way to escape the iron ring constraining Germany's expansion, a ring that had ironically been forged by Bismarck himself. Of course, the Franco-Russian alliance and the threat of war on two fronts predisposed the German military to act quickly and aggressively. From the army's point of view, restraint and caution could only help an enemy with an enormous geopolitical (not to mention demographic) advantage. Once the Germans were convinced that the Austrian-Russian conflict over Serbia would lead to war, the general staff rushed precipitously into battle and the Schlieffen Plan was activated.[8]

The German invasion of France through neutral Belgium was thus, from Germany's point of view, not an aggressive but a kind of preventive war which would make possible any future defense against the Russians. In fact, the invasion was both a propaganda and a military disaster, since the French (reinforced by their British allies) were able to bog the Germans down in what unexpectedly turned out to be a long war of attrition in the trenches of northern France. Without the technology of mechanized warfare to carry it out, the Schlieffen Plan bogged down in the west.[9] Ironically, the great German victories were in the east, where Russia's vast armies could not make up for its technological inferiority. Here, at least, the battle line was more fluid.

Overall, however, the failure of the Schlieffen Plan doomed the German Army to what it feared the most: a long war. Indeed, it was the sheer length of the war that was most decisive in shaping its character. Long-term war put new and unexpected pressures on the German Empire, pressures that ultimately reactivated the fault lines dividing its people. Businesses had to be supervised by the government, markets replaced by war economy, profiteers punished, transportation rationalized and public opinion regulated. The elements of a total state thus came into being. Ultimately, that state buckled under the awful strain. It was not only increasingly obvious that the entire nation was at war, but that in this struggle the home front was as important as the battle front. As the war dragged on, it began to appear that the country whose home front collapsed first would lose, no matter how successful it was on the battlefield. The long-run prosecution of the war was clearly dependent on the continued nationalism of the masses, a nationalism that was increasingly put to the test by the ever greater hardship the common people were experiencing. Failure to win the war quickly enough led to de-nationalization and thus to out and out defeat.[10]

Could better propaganda have shored up the enthusiasm of the people? Hitler himself later thought so. But the situation in the German Empire was complicated by the fact that the nationalism of the masses was from the beginning less intense and thus more easily diluted than that of their social betters. In Germany especially, the working classes were strongly influ-

enced by a Marxism that, though watered down, helped articulate their politics. Mass politics in Germany (as elsewhere in early-twentieth-century Europe) emerged in the form of working-class parties made possible by the extension of the franchise. This extension was probably as much a result as a cause of the nationalization of the masses. By entering the political system, working-class parties symbolized their willingness to give up a genuinely revolutionary program in order to participate in the nation. By 1914, the working-class and ostensibly Marxist SDP was the largest party in the German Empire. It supported the war, but its support was conditional upon the conflict's defensive and limited character. As the war dragged on, becoming increasingly offensive and unlimited, the SDP in particular and the people in general began to grow weary of the unending struggle. As it turned out, two radically different events finished off morale and thus the home front in 1917. In the west, the Americans' entry into the war convinced the German masses that the war was no longer limited. In the east, the overthrow of the tsar and his eventual replacement by a socialist regime convinced the masses that continued war in the east was no longer defensive. By late summer 1918, discontent was spreading through the German Army. The leaders of that army then made a fateful decision. They decided to cut and run. No longer interested in saving the state, their main interest was to save their own class privileges by preserving the army from the disintegration that was sure to set in if the war went on any longer. In a sense, the behavior of Ludendorff in the fall of 1918 represented a kind of de-nationalization of the aristocracy, analogous to the de-nationalization of the masses. Significantly, Ludendorff and Hindenburg sought to preserve the reputation of the corps by compelling the civil authorities to do the dirty work of making peace.[11]

## III

It was one of the tragedies of the First World War that as destructive as it was, it was not destructive enough to destroy the dying cult of nationalism that had been born in the Enlightenment. With neither the United States nor the Soviet Union willing (or able) to intervene, the old Europe lingered on with all its petty hatreds. Europe was like a wounded animal, all the more vicious because it was wounded, and Germany was Europe in microcosm. The Treaty of Versailles made it a wounded animal too. Clemenceau and his allies should have either healed the *Reich* or killed it; instead they maimed it and permitted it to live. A reconstituted Germany, based on the principle of national self-determination championed by Wilson and Lenin alike, would have absorbed German Austria and thus completed the unfinished business of 1866. A destroyed Germany would have menaced no one. Instead, the Germany that emerged out of Versailles was neither destroyed or healed. The German Republic (née Empire) was exiled from the family

of nations, deemed as uniquely evil and saddled with a punitive tax. Yet, it remained a potential menace.[12]

Germany was also more divided than ever. In a way, the SDP and the army represented the two great extremes of German society, the working classes on the one side and the Prussian aristocracy on the other. Yet, the more moderate members of each group were united in a strange and utterly cynical pact. To preserve order, they held their respective noses and joined hands in an enterprise in which neither believed. But they were strangely apt partners in crime after all. Both had repudiated what had turned out to be a superficial nationalism. The masses in the army had thrown down their weapons to save their lives, the officers had abandoned the struggle to save their power. But the extreme elements in each group, the Spartacist drop-outs from the SDP on the left and the Freikorps ex-soldiers on the right, dropped all pretense of civility and came to blows during the near civil war conditions that prevailed from 1918 to 1923.[13]

Against this background, the "stab-in-the-back" myth flourished. The fact was, however, that it was not completely mythical after all. The empire was indeed stabbed in the back in 1918, by discontented rank and file and self-serving officers alike.[14] After four years of useless struggle, civil peace was replaced by civil war, and both aristocratic pseudo-nationalism and working-class internationalism at least partially reasserted themselves. But no politician who wanted to revive German spirits could dare say this. There had been a failure of morale, but to blame either the workers or the generals would worsen morale still. And what politician could win through by insulting whole segments of the population anyway? It was in this context that the projection of German failure on the Jews was almost inevitable. The Jew was the necessary scapegoat who alone could atone for the sins of German officer and German worker alike, an atonement that would unite both in a conspiracy of silence. The Jews were not Germany's misfortune so much as its alibi.

In 1919, the army was a microcosm of the larger German society, increasingly polarized between pseudo-nationalist officers and de-nationalized rank and file. It was no doubt to reverse this process of disintegration that the propaganda department of the army group command organized a course of lectures on the "German problem" for certain soldiers gifted enough to influence their fellows.[15] Hitler was one of those ordered to attend what he himself later described in *Mein Kampf* as a course in which "the soldier was supposed to learn certain fundamentals of civic thinking."[16] During one of the lectures, he impressed the instructors so much (or so the story goes) that he was later sent to Munich as an "enlightenment officer." His precise duties in fact remain obscure. On the one hand, Hitler was clearly supposed to rescue the discontented common soldier from the clutches of socialist internationalism. At the same time, he seems to have already recognized that the aristocratic pseudo-nationalism of the officers

was incapable of winning over the masses. The only way of reconciling officers and men was thus to embark upon a third path which combined the aristocratic and the proletarian principles in a higher synthesis that owed nothing to either class.

On the other hand, Hitler was also a kind of informer, charged with observing organizations that might subvert the enlisted men. It was in this capacity, apparently, that he attended a September meeting of the so-called German Workers' Party, chaired by Karl Harrer, a sportswriter, and Anton Drexler, a railroad mechanic. Although the organization's name suggested it was a communist front, it was in fact a shabby little club with vague petit bourgeois ideals. Drexler, however, turned out to have notions similar to those of Hitler. The railway mechanic embraced a neo-volkish program of racial nationalism, anti-Semitism and national socialism. Like Hitler, Drexler was groping toward a kind of racist transformation of Marxism which would unite the polarized segments of German society by forcing them to recognize their underlying racial unity and common Jewish enemy.[17]

## IV

Drexler's "national socialism" represented a step beyond the racial nationalism of the nineteenth-century volkish thinkers. Whereas the latter remained a kind of isolated intellectual cult which snobbishly held aloof from the real political struggle between Prussia and the SDP, the former was interested in winning over the polarized factions of the German people and converting them to an irrevocable nationalism. In other words, Drexler was interested in transforming intellectual energy into political action. Harrer was Drexler's link to the more old-fashioned racial nationalists organized in the now notorious Thule Society.[18] The ideology of Thule was closer to that of the nineteenth-century Germanophiles and, consequently, tended to put a break on Drexler's populism. More significantly, Drexler himself utterly lacked the charisma to win large numbers of people to his cause. For these reasons, the German Workers' Party remained little more than a study group which played around with the ideas of mass politics.[19]

Hitler made the fateful decision to join Drexler's club in September 1919.[20] As a front-line soldier, he had experienced that "socialism of the trenches" which, for a moment, had united the sons of Prussia with the sons of workers in a common cause. It was an experience that soldiers had throughout Europe and not merely on the German lines. The First World War had ended in almost universal discontent, at least on the Continent. The victors were as disoriented and dissatisfied as the vanquished. Everywhere, vast numbers of unemployed men, whose only skill was fighting, waited for a leader. Everywhere, aimless groups of ex-officers whose dreams had died nursed searing wounds to their national pride.

It was thus no accident that fascism became the great creation of the interwar years. It grew out of the failure of nineteenth-century nationalism to live up to its promises. Fascism, in a phrase, was a revolutionary nationalism which sought to reconcile the class struggle by subjecting rich and poor alike to a strong leader. It consequently took its stand against both capitalism and communism even if it wished to borrow from both. Of course, the problem of class hatred was understood by nationalists before 1914, but the war had both exacerbated the problem and, ironically, suggested a solution. The solution was to take the ideology of battle and inject it into politics and thus to re-create the "national socialism" of the trenches in everyday life.[21] What was at stake, after all, was the continued existence of the nation in a Europe whose nineteenth-century angst lingered on.

In all this, the role of Bolshevism can be overestimated. The Russian Revolution did not cause fascism; it merely gave it an excuse. In fact, fascism was an attempt to continue the internecine struggles of the nineteenth century by means of an irrevocable nationalization of the masses. To regard Hitlerism (or fascism in general) as mere anti-Marxism is thus not only to give it less than its due, but also to give it something of an ethical alibi. This, in particular, has been the problem of Ernst Nolte, whose overemphasis on the anticommunist component of national socialism has led him to see the Second World War as a kind of defensive action against the Stalinist hordes.[22]

Although the name was coined by the Italians, fascism was a European-wide phenomenon, even if it did not come to power everywhere.[23] No set of ideas demonstrates so clearly the thesis that intellectual phenomena are products of adaptation and not mere "influence." Confronted by similar conditions, fascist movements began to proliferate throughout Europe in the fateful year 1919, but communists and capitalists alike often failed to give the new political ideology its due. Each saw in fascism a front for its opposition. The precise character of fascism was obscured by its tendency to make alliance with the old elites. Although fascists despised the bourgeois-aristocratic "notability" no less than they feared proletarian social democracy, they almost everywhere entered into a cynical pact with the upper classes in order to achieve power.[24] In this context, German national socialism fit the fascist pattern, with one apparent exception. No fascist movement was so obsessed with racial anti-Semitism as was the German. Indeed, Italy is the classic case of a fascism that not only left the Jews alone but even employed them.[25] To this extent, national socialism did not appear to be fascist after all. But if we remember that fascism was merely a kind of "nationalism plus" and that nineteenth-century German nationalism had already taken on a uniquely "biological" character, then it makes sense that German fascism simply intensified that preexisting character. National socialism was thus more or less a kind of volkish fascism.

Even in Germany national socialism emerged simultaneously in several places during the period from 1919 to 1923, and Hitler was hardly its sole founder. He had many rivals, while Harrer and Drexler tried to block his every move. If Hitler outdistanced them, it was because he alone seemed to be able to appeal to both the elites and the masses, thus becoming a living example of the national socialist ideal of reconciling the aristocracy and the workers. Since it was precisely these two groups who were most resistant to the volkish ideal, Hitler was more or less indispensable. Moreover, he was particularly sensitive to the way in which the party itself tended to polarize during the twenties, one side gravitating toward the aristocratic and the other side toward the socialist side. Here too he was indispensable since by both design and conviction *his* national socialism sought to reconcile White Munich with Red Berlin in a way impossible to sectarians like the racist Alfred Rosenberg or the socialist Gregor Strasser. If Hitler was not alone in realizing that national socialism had to reconcile aristocracy with socialism, he was alone is having the political and intellectual skill to do so.[26]

In this context, Hitler's failure to overthrow the Munich government in November 1923 and subsequent trial in 1924 was a profound bit of good luck for both him and his movement. This trial gave him an international reputation which eclipsed that of his rivals. His imprisonment gave him the opportunity to systematize his ideas. The result was a set of theoretical propositions that were sufficiently coherent to function as a unifying weltanschauung and yet sufficiently subtle to allow him a tactical flexibility. In this context, even the alleged unreadability of his autobiography proved useful. The two volumes were clear enough to serve as a set of parameters for Nazi doctrine, yet vague enough to preclude pinning him down without a careful reading. All in all, the worldview that Hitler developed in the early twenties helped him elaborate a special path for the German people which was supposed to be neither traditionally aristocratic nor overly egalitarian. To be sure, neither Prussia nor social democracy was ever more than halfheartedly won over to Hitlerism, but at least Hitler was able to suppress their hostility and co-opt them. As long as the generals were willing to fight and the workers were willing to die for the nation, all would be well. That was why he proclaimed national socialism as the middle path between communism and capitalism which alone could unite the German people. Hitler thus sought to unite the two main groups that polarized Germany by reinvoking the spirit of the trenches and casting the Jews in the role of pacifists.

In this context, Hitlerism may be seen as a kind of latter-day Jacobinism. Like the Jacobins, Hitler understood that a war of national liberation required a reconciliation of the classes by invoking a martial ideology in which the nation replaced God. Like the Jacobins, too, he realized that class reconciliation depended on blunting economic polarization. Just as Robespierre was willing to uphold the maximum and minimum, Hitler under-

stood that healing class division meant ending unemployment and inflation; it was neither necessary nor even desirable to tamper with private property. Conversely, when the economy briefly improved from 1925 to 1929 and ideological polarization decreased during the presidency of von Hindenburg, Hitlerism became less credible. Only the coming of the depression during the period from 1929 to 1933 made it attractive by reopening the now irreconcilable gap between "Prussianism" and socialism. By reactivating the class fault lines, the great economic crisis allowed Hitlerism to take root in the fissures within German society.

The most attractive feature of Hitler's ideology was thus its optimism. It was not merely his mood but his message that carried an infectious excitement. He was a secular messiah proclaiming a Germanic version of the "good news." The possibility of class reconciliation, the plans for a national revival, the identification of a universal enemy whose elimination would usher in the millennium all stirred his audiences to the very depths. Hitler spoke in the language of the philosophes, a language that had almost passed out of existence in the rarefied strata of the grand intelligentsia. But perhaps that was the only language the masses could really understand. For if the common people of Voltaire's time were in many ways still living in the age of Rabelais, the masses of Einstein's time were still living in the age of Voltaire. How could the demoralized multitudes in the German streets ever really understand the self-overcoming called for by Nietzsche, or old Freud's sad confession that at best neurosis might be transformed into "everyday unhappiness." Who but a few terrorists ever constructed a movement on the basis of nihilism? Hitler's success, at least in part, stemmed from the fact that he preserved (even as he vulgarized) the optimism of the philosophes in an increasingly pessimistic world. Hitlerism was not nihilism but a defense against nihilism.

## NOTES

1. For a more nuanced view of Bismarck's political economic policies, see David Calleo, *The German Problem Reconsidered: Germany and the Work Order, 1870 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 13–18. According to Sebastian Haffner, Bismarck's policies included the "renunciation of all territorial expansion in Europe," the repudiation of "all expansionist efforts in Germany, particularly Greater German aspirations" and "the disavowal of all claims to the incorporation of the 'unliberated' Germans excluded from the newly formed Reich, in particular of Austrian and Baltic Germans." See Sebastian Haffner, *The Ailing Empire: Germany from Bismarck to Hitler* (New York: Fromm International, 1991), p. 50. But see A.J.P. Taylor, *Bismarck: The Man and the Statesman* (New York: Vintage, 1967), whose assessment of the Iron Chancellor is somewhat different. Taylor treats the Iron Chancellor as a revolutionary who became conservative, instead of a conservative from the beginning. Also see Henry Kissinger, "Bismarck, the White Revolutionary," *Daedelus* 40 (Summer 1968): pp. 888–922.

2. For the development of *Weltpolitik*, see V. R. Berghahn, *Germany and the Approach of War in 1914* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), pp. 15–37; Bismarck, *The Kaiser vs. Bismarck: Suppressed Letters by the Kaiser and New Chapters from the Autobiography of the Iron Chancellor* (New York: Harper, 1921); Bernard von Bulow, *Imperial Germany* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1914); Johann von Bernstoff, *The Development of Germany as a World Power* (Philadelphia: American Academy of Social and Political Science, 1910), pp. 7–14; Katherine Lerman, "Bismarck's Heir: Chancellor Bernard von Bulow and the National Idea 1890–1918," in Breuilly, ed., *State of Germany*, pp. 103–27.

3. August Bebel, *Unsere Ziele* (Leipzig: Thiele, 1970); Karl Kautsky, *The Class Struggle* (New York: Norton, 1972). For Marx's critique of the German workers' movement, see Karl Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Program* (New York: International, 1938). Also see Peter Gay, *The Dilemma of Democratic Socialism: Eduard Bernstein's Challenge to Marx* (New York: Collier, 1962).

4. Adolph Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1943) p. 139.

5. For an overview of the diplomatic reconfiguration of alliances after Bismarck, see Sidney Fay, *The Origins of the World War* (New York: Macmillan, 1930).

6. Oazkar Jaszi, *The Dissolution of the Hapsburg Monarchy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961); Alan Sked, *The Decline and Fall of the Hapsburg Monarchy* (London: Longman, 1989); Samuel Williamson, *Austria-Hungary and the Origins of the First World War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991). For Hitler's withering critique of the Dual Alliance, see *Mein Kampf*, pp. 145–49.

7. See Calleo, *German Problem*, 40–41; Max Montgelas, *The Case for the Central Powers* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1925).

8. See Erich von Falkenhayn, *The German General Staff and Its Decisions* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1920); Erich von Ludendorff, *My War Memories, 1914–1918* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1919). 2 vols.

9. Ludendorff, ibid.

10. But see Haffner, *Ailing Empire*, pp. 115–16. Haffner puts more stress on the demoralization of the masses when they were in the army as opposed to the home front.

11. For the effect of the Russian Revolution on the German war effort, see Ludendorff, *War Memories*, pp. 2:446–59.

12. In fact, with the United States and the Soviet Union out of the picture and Germany surrounded by a new set of weak states, Weimar was relatively *stronger* than the empire, a point that is made by Haffner. See, *Ailing Empire*, pp. 140–41; for an excellent review of the Versailles treaty by a skilled diplomatic historian, see John Hidden, *Germany and Europe 1919–1939* (London: Longman, 1993), pp. 20–31.

13. For an exciting account of these near civil war conditions and their role in shaping the emergence of a fascist third force, see Flood, *Hitler: The Path to Power*; Harry von Kessler, *In The Twenties: The Diaries of Harry Kessler* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971).

14. See Ludendorff, *War Memories,* pp. 2:765–71, where the general develops the stab-in-the-back thesis without being too specific about exactly who did the stabbing.

15. Joachim Fest, *Hitler* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1974), pp. 109–24, presents the best analysis of this period.

16. See Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, pp. 207–10.

17. For a discussion of the early days of the German Workers' Party, see Ralph Max Engelman, "Dietrich Eckart and the Genesis of Nazism" (Ph.D. diss., Washington University, 1971), pp. 127–68.

18. Reginald Phelps, "Before Hitler Came: Thule Society and German Order," *Journal of Modern History* 35 (1963): 245–61.

19. John Toland, *Adolph Hitler* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co., 1976), pp. 1:87–94.

20. For Hitler's own account of this epoch-making decision, see *Mein Kampf*, pp. 217–24.

21. Haffner's observation that "the mass armies of World War I were thinking armies, unlike the old professional armies" suggests that fascism arose in part as a means of militarizing the masses who had previously demilitarized the army. See Haffner, *Ailing Empire*, pp. 115–16.

22. The heart of the matter is Nolte's claim that "without Marxism there is no fascism," a notion easily converted into the claim that Marxism justifies fascism. Nolte's formula arises from a defective theory of intellectual history which sees one movement as a reaction to another. We should rather say that "without Marxism, a different fascism" since the elements of a fascist synthesis were already present before the war while the necessity of militarizing the masses after the war provided a niche for the fascist synthesis. But see Nolte, *Three Faces of Fascism: Action Française, Italian Fascism, National Socialism* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1966), p. 21.

23. For a discussion of fascist movements as "characteristic" of the interwar years throughout Europe, see Nolte, *Three Faces of Fascism*, pp. 3–9.

24. For the relationship between fascism and the upper classes, see Weber, *Fascism*.

25. Meir Michaelis, *Mussolini and the Jews* (Oxford: Claredon, 1978), pp. 10–56.

26. See, for example, Alfred Rosenberg, *Selected Writings* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1970); Otto Strasser, *Hitler and I* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1940).

# 4

# Fascism and the Mixed Economy

Even those specialists who recognize that Hitler actually possessed a coherent worldview would be the first to deny that it was an economic one. Whether they believe that Hitler's ideas represented a return to a pre-economic "feudalism" or a flight into a "post-economic" totalitarianism, most historians are certain that those ideas were the antithesis of the economic vision that has otherwise shaped the modern world. It is thus easy to argue that the "German catastrophe" was an aberration, a tragic misstep in the glorious march toward material freedom and knowledge. Unfortunately, a deeper analysis of Hitler's ideas must cast doubt on this certainty. This analysis reveals not only that Hitlerism possessed the elements of a political economy but that these elements provided a framework for Hitler's understanding of the German problem.[1]

The central place of political economy in Hitlerism was, however, in part obscured by Hitler himself. Again and again, he claimed to have come to destroy the primacy of "Jewish" economics and to reassert the old "Aryan" primacy of politics. As early as 1919 he opposed the dissolution of German society into individualism and internationalism as symptoms of the "racial tuberculosis of the nation."[2] In *Mein Kampf* he further argued against the primacy of economics in the Second Reich, seeing in it the roots of Germany's failure in the First World War. Germany failed, Hitler believed, because it had substituted economic for military conquest, only to have to resort to war anyway from a weakened position.[3] Thus Eberhard Jäckel concluded that the Hitler "economic policy was . . . only an instrument, a means to the end of providing the state with freedom of action."[4] Most other commentators have agreed, taking Hitler at his word, that the national socialist weltanschauung demoted economics to a subordinate role. At

most, a few writers have conceded that if Hitler did not have an economic theory, he at least possessed a "substitute for an economic theory."[5] It is of course correct that Hitler had neither the education nor the inclination to express his ideas about economics in professional terms. This does not mean, however, that these ideas were not significant to him. Hitlerism was in fact the doctrine of brilliant if ruthless ideologue whose ideology was securely rooted in the tradition of political economy.

## I

To understand the role of economics in Hitler's thought it is necessary to remember that, from almost the beginning of his political career, he portrayed national socialism as a uniquely conceived middle path between the sterile extremes of capitalism and communism. In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler explained how the petty-bourgeois socialism of Gottfried Feder fit into his already developing worldview.[6] Feder's "narrow-gage socialism" attacked internationalism as an essentially Jewish form of interest slavery dangerous to the integrity of the German people. High finance was thus stigmatized as unproductive since it made use of an unnatural form of international capital which flowed across the boundaries of naturally conceived nation-states. It is true that the German dictator soon discarded the specifics of Feder's crank philosophy just as he discarded Feder himself by relegating him to an obscure position in the Nazi state, but Hitler always preserved the idea that national socialism was a kind of fascism, a third path that had its own unique justification.[7]

The Hitler of the twenties and thirties viewed Germany as torn between two irreconcilable worldviews, one reactionary and the other subversive, each tied to its own socioeconomic base. On the one side were the better classes. In particular, the upper levels of the German bourgeoisie had forfeited their claim to be a revolutionary class by allying themselves with the old aristocracy and thus turning their backs on the masses. According to Hitler, the Junker-bourgeois alliance constituted a "closed society" in which people were judged solely on the basis of their social status.[8] This society possessed a traditionalist worldview, supposedly nationalist but actually quasi-dynastic, outmoded and ineffectual.[9] On the other side, in opposition to the better classes, was the "laboring population." The masses, Hitler argued, had been alienated from their own nation and thus won over to an international Marxist worldview which was utterly modern.[10]

Capitalism, as Hitler understood it, was essentially hierarchical in the sense that its most salient feature was its acceptance of class divisions. In contrast, Marxism was essentially egalitarian, its most characteristic feature being its leveling socialism. Hitler thus viewed Weimar Germany as not only divided, but divided between two equally incorrect weltanschauungen. On the one hand, the republic preserved the Junker-bourgeois class

system in the economic realm. On the other hand, it encouraged what Hitler considered an essentially Marxist concept of democracy in the political realm. Even the National Socialist Party was polarized between Munich conservatives and Berlin socialists. For Hitler, this bifurcation of German life was intolerable. The presence of two mutually hostile and irreconcilable worldviews not only stood in the way of the coordination of wills necessary for a national revival, but both ideologies ignored the fundamental laws of nature Hitler believed were necessary to secure such a revival.[11]

## II

Hitler believed that the German people needed a dynamic political economy to achieve their destiny, but how to achieve that dynamism? The German dictator believed that all growth could be traced to individual effort—but only at the service of the common good.[12] He thus tempered what might be taken as a "libertarian" definition of inventiveness with a somber collectivism. Invention, Hitler believed, was thus the product of individual geniuses of high *personality value*. But personality value was in turn conditioned by the individual's biological (racial) endowments or *race value* so that an economic policy had to be underpinned by a racial policy.[13]

For Hitler, the ultimate goal of a people was to apply those material laws that would enable the multiplication of personality values and thus the proliferation of inventions necessary to raise the technological level ever higher. Nor was there any end to this process, which would enable the best of humanity, after conquering the world, to "have a free path for activity in domains which will lie partly above it and partly outside it." This was the vision of unlimited expansion that Hitler opened up to his followers.[14] But it was precisely here, Hitler believed, that both capitalism *and* communism failed—and for several reasons. In the first place, neither system possessed the social preconditions for inventiveness. A proper political economy was essential because race value was a necessary but not sufficient cause of personality value. In other words, if the first was necessary in order to produce the second, it did not automatically do so. Thus, in his *Secret Book* Hitler wrote that "on the basis of its general race value a people can certainly entertain a justified hope that it can bring real minds into existence," but only if that people did not "restrict such brains in their activity" by diluting them in a sea of mediocrities. Only a leader-state, dedicated to selecting the best minds from among a people and giving them freedom of action, could permit that people to transform its race value into the personality values necessary to raise the overall level of wealth and culture.[15]

In this context, capitalism was inadequate because it accepted the notion of class just as Marxism was inadequate because it accepted the notion of mass. Capitalist political economy had simply taken the family as a natural phenomenon given to the system, thus accepting the inequality of *social*

endowments. But the existence of these endowments, Hitler believed, stood in the way of the selection of inventive personalities. The class system snobbishly denied the talent of the lowborn (including Hitler himself), thus weakening the potential of the nation. Capitalism, in other words, was insufficiently democratic. At the same time, Hitler argued, Marxism was too democratic. Marxism's leveling of everything stood in the way of inventive personalities by denying the far more fundamental inequality of *biological* endowments so that individual genius was drowned in a sea of mediocrity. Hitler thus advanced the notion of a third force which would simultaneously guarantee property as a reward for and reject class distinctions as a barrier to effort.

In the second place, Hitler believed, neither communism nor capitalism possessed a proper understanding of the concept of work, a concept essential for inventiveness. For Hitler, labor was basically a synthesis of individual effort and social need. He thus argued that while work was essential "for maintaining [individual] life," true work did not "conflict with the interests of the community." Only when individual labor was reconciled to communal need did it become truly productive. Cultural, including technological, development was consequently proportional to the ability to reconcile individual genius with social need.[16] Yet, it was precisely this reconciliation that neither capitalism nor communism was able to effect. Indeed, for Hitler, both systems actually possessed a similarly defective concept of work by overidentifying it with a narrowly defined working class. Capitalism and communism equally contrasted profits with wages, the only difference being that the latter saw profit as exploitive and the former did not. In contrast, Hitler denied the dichotomy between profit and wage and thus between the labor of the "brain" and that of the "fist."[17] What appears to be profit, he seemed to argue, was in fact merely a superior wage paid as a reward for the capitalist's greater inventiveness. Property, in this context was simply an accumulation of wages. While such a notion of profit harked back to the genesis of economic ideology and was no doubt primitive from the perspective of both mature Marxist and bourgeois economics, it nevertheless underscored Hitler's tendency to regard all Germans (including himself) as workers, even if their work was not equally productive. The concept of profit as a superior wage was thus tied to a notion of work that neither communism nor capitalism apparently possessed.[18]

In the third place, Hitler believed, neither capitalism nor communism had a coherent vision of political economy in the broadest connotation of the term. In a real sense, Hitler's critique of Weimar was that it suffered from a profound disjunction of the political and the economic spheres. The republic was insufficiently integrated. Within this context, both Weimar communism and capitalism were merely "partial" weltanschauungen which bifurcated the German people along transnational (and thus unnatural) class lines. The capitalist had more in common with a foreign capitalist

than with a domestic worker, while the worker had more in common with a foreign worker than with a domestic capitalist. From Hitler's point of view, the so-called nationalist bourgeois was thus a secret even as the socialist worker was an open traitor. More specifically, the former was too conservative even as the latter was too radical to be a genuine nationalist. Hitlerism thus sought to make the political and the economic spheres identical in autarky.[19]

## III

While we have seen that Hitler believed that a certain kind of political economy could alone preserve the intrinsic or "racial" value of a people, he actually went even further by holding that the right type of economics could actually enhance that value. For Hitler race value was diluted or strengthened according to the relationship between the two factors of production, land and labor. Since labor tended to outgrow the land that supported it, the race value of a people depended on the resolution of this disparity. To start with, Hitler noted, a people might limit births. But such a limitation would frustrate that natural law that would have the most creative and productive individuals win out *after* they were born. Since birth control randomly limited the birth of individuals irrespective of their future contribution, it acted against the tendency of the highest personality values to boost the present standard of living and thus the future race value of a people. Hitler thus concluded that birth control must at the very least lower the race value of the nation that practices it in comparison to those nations that do not.[20]

In the second place, Hitler considered emigration as a solution to the unfavorable land-to-labor ratio of a people—only to dismiss it immediately. Only the highest personality values of a people would be likely to have the courage and inventiveness to strike out on their own, thus robbing that people of its best minds and any chance for future viability.[21] A third solution he advanced was that of "internal colonization" by means of the technological intensification of agriculture. Creative minds being cultivated by a wise policy of outlawing birth control and emigration, what is to prevent such minds from using their inventiveness to increase the productivity of the soil? Significantly, Hitler was very careful in answering this question. A significant bias toward technological expansion prevented him from dismissing the possibility of internal colonization all at once. In his *Secret Book*, Hitler thus noted that the "history of human cultivation of the soil is one of permanent progress, permanent improvement and therefore of increasing yields." While there might be an absolute limit "somewhere," the real limit seems to have been a *relative* one, since countries with comparatively fewer people could apply equally advanced technology to the soil and still have much more room to grow, both in terms of standard of

living and in terms of population. Long before the more densely settled nation began to reach any "absolute" limit, it would reach a "relative" limit within which it would begin to sink below the generally accepted standard of living established by the more sparsely settled nation. But for an advanced people for whom past luxuries had become present necessities, this relative limit would appear to be an absolute limit. Such a nation would then be forced prematurely into limiting its population by birth control and emigration, thus diluting its race value, personality values and ultimate strength at a time when that nation's more sparsely settled rivals were still growing.[22]

Eventually a people might drift toward a fourth solution based on foreign trade by producing nonagricultural commodities in return for food. In this case such a people's numbers could grow far beyond their territory's capacity to support them. But, as Hitler argued, international trade was itself highly competitive. As population expanded in all the major nations, more and more industrial goods would be dumped on the market in exchange for food, so that their value would fall to the vanishing point. In this quasi-Leninist scenario increasing competition for customers would eventually lead the most highly advanced peoples toward war. Pacifism, in other words, led to its opposite.[23]

Thus Hitler found his way to the inevitable fifth solution: a territorial as opposed to a commercial war. A successful people, endowed with high race value and organized into a leader-state which could transform those race values into personality values, ultimately had to seek to expand its territorial base. The conquest of greater space would make possible a still greater population, thus increasing the potential for a higher race value, better personality values, more inventiveness and an overall richer culture. This in turn increased the potential for further expansion, thus starting the cycle all over again, until a single people expands over the entire globe, extinguishing all other "inferior" peoples in the process, and raises human life to the highest conceivable level. Conversely, an unsuccessful people would become overpopulated, limit births, dilute its race value, dissipate its personality values, lose its inventiveness, become increasingly weaker in relation to its neighbors and thus give up territory to them. This in turn increased the potential for further contraction until such a people was extinguished from the earth.[24]

## IV

Hitler's attack on pacifism was both a repudiation of Bismarck's conservative commerce-oriented state and the emerging global economy of the twentieth century. The national socialist regime thus stood out from previous as well as later German regimes, not because it had no economic theory but because it had a different type of economic theory. From the

perspective of *that* theory, trade was ultimately an unnatural palliation of the land-labor problem which would eventually lead to war anyway. It was in fact the Bismarckian state that decided on economic policy for ultimately political reasons. Bismarck's commitment to a *Kleindeutschland* necessitated a truncated territory which had to be supplemented by a commercial policy. Despite Hitler's emotional tributes to the Prussian tradition as a means of co-opting the military, his worldview actually constituted a devastating critique of that tradition as the Bismarckian *Reich* which sought to preserve it. From the standpoint of Hitlerism, the Second Reich had "artificially" preserved Prussian hegemony by limiting the territory of the German people and thus increasing its dependence on an unnatural commercialism.[25] Despite his rhetoric, Hitler's ire was not directed at the primacy of economics as such, but at the primacy of an *unnatural* economic life dictated by archaic political traditions. It was in fact precisely because he did take a stand against the remnants of traditionalism in German life that Hitler could consider himself a revolutionary. Yet, conversely, Hitler also took what he considered to be a conservative stand against the coming hypercommercialism of an emerging global economy.

Against the once and future internationalism he dismissed as "economic," Hitler upheld a *natural* economics based on the notion of self-contained or *autarkic* regional economies. This idea was ultimately sustained by his belief that a people must possess its own productive forces within a specific territory. Autarky presupposed a natural balance between that territory and the people it supported. But the very dynamism of the Hitlerian system precluded an absolute conception of autarky in which a people was in perpetual equilibrium with its land. Rather, land and labor were never completely in equilibrium so that nations were ever expanding and contracting. Strong states merely moved from a smaller to a larger autarky, while weak states moved from a larger to a smaller autarky. It was precisely because future expansion required present economic imbalance that a high standard of living could actually weaken a people by making it too self-satisfied, thus preventing the ultimate goal of securing a still higher standard of living. Conversely, military values might necessitate a short-run sacrifice of a people's well-being, but only to secure that well-being in the long run. Thus what seem like anti-economic statements in Hitler's writings from a static perspective become pro-economic sentiments from a dynamic perspective.[26]

## V

Even if we concede that Hitler has a place in the history of economic thought after all, the precise location of that place may seem unclear. The problem is that so much of his apparent subordination of economics to politics was mere posturing. His neo-medievalism, for example, was very

much a sop for the class of aristocratic Junkers whom he secretly despised, while his pseudo-Keynesianism was fundamentally a matter of practicality in dealing with the workers; from the beginning he knew that he had to satisfy the military if he were to stay in power, just as he had to nationalize the masses by ending the depression. But a careful reading of his speeches and writings suggests that he was neither a mercantilist nor a Keynesian, neither a medievalist nor a marginalist. Rather, as the above analysis of his ideas suggests, his economic ideas fit all too well into the classical-physiocratic style of thought. In this sense, Hitler was closer to Ricardo and Marx than to Machiavelli or Keynes. This can be demonstrated in several ways:

In the first place, Hitler was like the classical economists in subordinating individual competition to a higher "natural law" which enabled him to justify that competition. This natural law preserved a quasi-religious character in the Hitlerian weltanschauung by subjugating individual sentiment and perception to a higher purpose which mercilessly resolved competition into collective harmony. Thus, while value arises only from individuals, it becomes *realizable* value only if it is put at the service of the community. By expressing such views, Hitler cast himself in the role of a philosopher-king whose duty was to enforce the objective laws of nature irrespective of individual suffering. It was precisely in preserving the distinction between natural and unnatural, to which he subordinated the individual, that Hitler also preserved the Enlightenment compromise that jettisoned religion but at the same time warded off the existential relativism perhaps first evidenced in the writings of de Sade.

Secondly, Hitler's economic ideas were also permeated by Enlightenment notions of progress. Again and again, he claimed that by following the laws of nature a people might rise to the level of a "higher" humanity. Cruelty, warfare and even the extermination of whole peoples can be justified on this basis. Hitlerism, like Marxism, thus appears as a latter-day version of the classical thought that offered a secular substitute for salvation. Like Marx, Hitler conceived of progress in highly materialistic, technological terms. To be sure, his vision of progress emphasized its aesthetic at the expense of its ethical dimensions. But he did follow Marx by linking progress to a theory of growth. Like classical thought in general, Hitler's ideas were more dynamic than static. He thus believed that space was necessary to make war to secure more space to make war to secure still more space—until the entire world was covered by a single people of the highest race value and thus the highest personality values, who could lift humanity beyond and above the earth. What we have here are the old quasi-messianic ideas of unlimited growth, implicit in the Marxist rejection of that *absolute* scarcity at the heart of twentieth-century microeconomic theory. It is true that both Marx and Hitler possessed a concept of *relative*, or temporary, scarcity which was vital in providing a motivation for the dialectic of

history. Thus, for Marx this temporary scarcity was imposed by class oppression; for Hitler, by the competition for space. But just as the triumph of the proletariat would free up the limited productive forces of humanity, so the triumph of the Aryans would enable humanity to transcend the narrow limits of earthly space itself.

Thirdly, Hitler placed the classical distinction between productive and unproductive activity at the very center of his worldview. The hagiography of labor and the demonology of laziness were no mere propaganda points but fundamental axioms that set the whole system of valuation in motion. The distinction between creative work and parasitism (which needs to be discussed in much greater detail later) became the means for distinguishing between life and death itself: the former for the industrious Aryan, the latter not only for the parasitic Jew but for the Gypsy as well, along with anyone else too sick to earn his keep. Yet this horror was deeply rooted in the classical conception of economic life, where it was bound up with the assumption of growth; if nations could expand or contract, that which contributed to their expansion was productive and that which contributed to their contraction was unproductive. As we have seen, the productive/unproductive dichotomy was a universal constant in the Enlightenment phase of Western culture, even if precisely *what* was productive and unproductive varied from school to school. Marx merely adopted the distinction to his particular interpretation by stigmatizing all capital, whether financial or industrial, as unproductive. In contrast, the Hitlerian ideology sought to unite German capital and labor by stigmatizing only financial capital, since it had no specific location but flowed from region to region. A revolutionary distinction that had arisen as a means of stigmatizing unearned aristocratic wealth was thus transformed into a reactionary defense against an increasingly international economy. What remained was the ideology of labor, which conferred life on those who worked and death on those who did not.[27]

Finally, Hitler was also following the classical-physiocratic model by giving economic life a fundamentally regional foundation. Perhaps because it was bound up with the consolidation of the nation-state out of the feudal remnants, classical thought operated on the assumption that the world was composed of a set of discrete modes of production, each occupying a specific territorial base. Even Marx and Engels, despite their apparent internationalism, saw the earth in terms of a number of competing productive modes scattered over its surface. Bound up with this was the classical tendency to see "real" production as a physical process occupying a definite space. Hitler did not even have to restore but merely to preserve on a popular level this "territorial" conception of the economy, a conception that contained an implicit bias against extreme individualism on the one hand and extreme universalism on the other, since both appear indefinite, abstract and deracinated. Territory thus became the ultimate criterion for

"real" or natural economic life. This conception between territory and economy was one more example of the characteristically Enlightenment essentialism that distinguished between the real and the unreal, the natural and the unnatural, the productive and the unproductive. Quasi-theological and even ethical, this essentialism provided a moral basis for distinguishing between those forms of life that were regarded as tolerable and those that were not. Hitler thus preserved into the increasingly relativistic—but potentially more tolerant—culture of twentieth-century Europe an outmoded secular religion complete with a warrant for genocide.

Hitler's contention that his weltanschauung was the antithesis of economics must thus be severely qualified. In fact, political economy played an important role in his thinking. Thus he did not restore the primacy of the state after all but, quite the contrary, subordinated the state itself to a dynamic of aggressive technological and cultural expansion. In doing this, Hitler also asserted himself against the last remnants of aristocratic civility at the same time that he opposed the emerging relativism of consumer culture. But commentators have missed this because they have taken "economics" to be synonymous with twentieth-century economic theory, thus mistaking Hitler's classical political economy for a reimposition of politics. This is a shame, because the full implications of the Hitlerian worldview can be understood only by recognizing its classical dynamism, a dynamism that made it an ideology of the long run. To be sure, linking Hitlerism with classicism may seem more perverse than ironic, but the affinities between Hitler and the Enlightenment should not lead us to rehabilitate the former but to scrutinize the latter more thoroughly. However beneficial the aspirations of the classical economists, their overidealization of natural law, productivism and essentialism also contained the seeds of a radical evil.

## NOTES

1. For conventional (and complacent) discussions of national socialism as an economic ideology see Joseph A. Schumpeter, *History of Economic Analysis* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), pp. 1154–56; Karl Pribam, *A History of Economic Reasoning* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), pp. 387–91.

2. See Adolph Hitler, *Hitler's Letters and Notes,* comp. Werner Maser (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), p. 215.

3. Adolph Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1943), p. 143.

4. Eberhard Jäckel, *Hitler's World View: A Blueprint for Power* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), p. 78.

5. Berenice Carroll, *Design for Total War: Arms and Economics in the Third Reich* (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1968), p. 95.

6. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, pp. 209–10, 213.

7. For a discussion of the possible relationship between Feder's ideas and those of Hitler, see Ernst Nolte, *Three Faces of Fascism: Action Française*, Italian Fascism, National Socialism (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966),

pp. 324–25. The phrase "narrow-gage socialism" is his. See also Gottfried Feder, *Hitler's Official Program and Its Fundamental Ideas* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1971).

8. Adolph Hitler, *Hitler's Table Talk, 1941–1944: His Private Conversations*, trans. Norman Cameron and R. H. Stevens (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1973), p. 45.

9. See Adolph Hitler, *The Speeches of Adolph Hitler*, ed. Norman Baynes. Volume I (London: Oxford University Press, 1942), pp. 1:12–13, and *Mein Kampf*, pp. 336–41, for his critique of upper-class pseudo-nationalism.

10. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, p. 331.

11. See Hitler, *Speeches*, pp. 1:809–10.

12. See Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, p. 298.

13. Hitler's theory of inventiveness is sketched out in *Mein Kampf*, pp. 352, 444–51. For another (and rather unclear) discussion of personality value, or *Personlichkeitwert*, see Jäckel, *Hitler's World View*, pp. 8, 96–98. For a discussion of the individualist and collectivist themes in Hitler's writings, see Dumont, *Essays in Individualism*, pp. 149–79.

14. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, pp. 383–84.

15. Adolph Hitler, *Hitler's Secret Book*. Introduction by Telford Taylor (New York: Grove Press, 1961), pp. 31–32; *Mein Kampf*, 443.

16. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 298–302.

17. See Hitler, *Speeches*, p. 1:16, for his attempt to reconcile the workers of the brain and those of the fist.

18. Hitler's tendency to reduce profit to a "superior wage" is thus akin to the old physiocratic tendency to conflate the capitalist and the worker. For a discussion of this, see Karl Marx, *Theories of Surplus Value* (Moscow: Progress, 1969), p. 1:47.

19. Hitler, *Speeches*, pp. 1:4–14. Hitler thus argued that "we are further persuaded that economic prosperity is inseparable from political freedom and that therefore that house of lies, 'Internationalism,' must immediately collapse" (p. 17).

20. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, pp. 131–33; *Secret Book*, pp. 17–18. See also Carroll, *Design for Total War*, 96–97, Jäckel, *Hitler's World View*, pp. 34–35, and Calleo, *German Problem*, pp. 88–89, for discussions of the different options Hitler puts forward to resolve the land/labor imbalance.

21. Hitler, *Secret Book*, p. 18.

22. Ibid., pp. 18–19, 95–96; Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, pp. 133–36.

23. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, pp. 142–43; *Secret Book*, pp. 20–24.

24. See Jäckel, *Hitler's World View*, pp. 95–96, for what he calls "Hitler's dialectics of history."

25. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, pp. 142–43. For an excellent discussion of Hitler's break with Bismarkian geopolitical strategy, see Calleo, *German Problem*, pp. 85–121.

26. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, pp. 151–52.

27. For the way in which the worship of labor replaced that of God in the classical political economy, see Jean Baudrillard, *The Mirror of Production* (St. Louis: Telos, 1975). For a broader treatment of productivist themes in national socialism and its fellow travelers, see Michael Zimmerman, *Heidegger's Confrontation with Modernity: Technology, Politics, Art* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990).

# 5

# Race: The Metaphysics of the Mixed Economy

Adolph Hitler is universally recognized as the most notorious racist of the twentieth century, yet the precise role of race in his thought remains elusive. To be sure, if fascism can be regarded as a revolutionary intensification of nationalism, then it makes sense that the German variant of fascism would be compelled to intensify the already racist nationalism it inherited from the nineteenth-century Germanophiles. But Hitler's concept of biology was a good deal subtler than that of crude racial nationalism. A closer look at his racism suggests that it was, in fact, carefully constructed to correspond to his economic ideas. Biology thus functioned as a kind of "metaphysics of the mixed economy" which served to guarantee the coherence of the nation.

Now, it is often considered a weakness of Hitler's weltanschauung that its concept of race was so imprecise. Hitler, Jäckel noted, did not "place a high value on terminological precision" and thus used "race" as a near synonym for words like "people" or "nation."[1] This *apparent* vagueness has permitted the emergence of conflicting interpretations of Hitler's biological theories. On the one hand, a large body of literature has argued that Hitler was obsessed with biological similarity as the basis for nationality. For example, the Austrian scholar Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn maintained that Hitler "dreamed of making the Germans themselves more uniform, even physically by planned breeding." Such a reading of Hitler suggests that he was less a German nationalist than a pan-Aryan supremacist who wanted to create a transnational blond aristocracy in which even Germans would be reduced to second-class citizens if they were dark-haired. A. James Gregor thus claimed that "there were Swedes, Danes, and Norwegians, members of enemy nationalities that were conceived superior to [ethnic]

Germans—if those Germans were members of inferior racial stocks."[2] On the other hand, another body of literature has suggested that Hitler was really a more traditional nationalist who used the Aryan idea as a mere rallying point for essentially German interests, a thesis upheld by Ernst Nolte's observation that "up to the very end the Führer made a number of statements placing German citizens above foreign nations of like racial origin."[3] Thus, even if we concede that Hitler was a racial nationalist, the question remains, just how racist was he?

In fact, as Gregor himself noted, national socialism as a whole tended to polarize between "two conflicting traditions," the first inflating and the second deflating the importance of Aryanism.[4] But if the "hyper-Aryan" position was represented by Himmler and his dreams of a blond SS state, and the "hypo-Aryan" position was championed by the Strasser brothers and their commitment to some kind of national Bolshevism, Hitler clearly sought to navigate a route between them. He thus told Otto Wagener that "we must accept the mixing of [German] blood as it is. We must not call one [German] blood worse than another, one mixture worse than another" lest the *Volk* be divided. Hitler's position within Nazism was thus a microcosm of Nazism's third-force position within the larger German context. In the end, he rejected the quasi-aristocratic racism of the Munich-oriented Thule Society as certainly as the quasi-proletarian socialism of the Berlin-oriented Strassers because his desire for both party and national unity required a synthesis.[5]

## I

It was precisely the fact that Hitler's racial ideas were so vague that allowed them to provide an underpinning for his political economy. To achieve national unity, he recognized that while some emphasis on race was necessary, too much would be counterproductive. What Hitler wanted was a concept of race that would provide a metaphysical foundation for a unified and all-powerful state, a state that would abolish the distinctions between Austria and Prussia, between the Catholic south and the Protestant north. Thus, like Bismarck, he faced a political maximization problem, albeit one of a very different character from that confronting the Iron Chancellor. On the one hand, the hypo-Aryanist notion of race was too weak to unite the German people fully. On the other hand, the hyper-Aryanist racial idea was so strong that it was likely to fragment the Germans all over again into Aryans and non-Aryans. With uncanny brilliance, Hitler rejected both the "concentrated" and the "diluted" theories of race held by his rivals, instead upholding a third position. Consequently, even if he sometimes conceded that Germans could be divided into four racial subtypes, he never gave up the belief in their ultimate unity.[6]

This was because from Hitler's standpoint race was what might be called a "noumenal" as opposed to either a "phenomenal" or a "mythical" concept. Racial "elements" existed, but in the real world they never took a pure form; nations were in fact always alloys of a lesser or greater degree of purity whose identity was thus only the result of a conscious will even if that identity did have an ultimately noumenal basis. In this context, the Germans and the Jews were both less races *in themselves* as *for themselves*. In his *Secret Book* Hitler thus regarded a people as not so much a pure race as a "multitude of more or less similar individual beings." The expression "more or less similar [*mehr oder minder gleicher*]" is emblematic of the subtlety of Hitler's thought since it struck a balance between homogeneity and heterogeneity. Similarity was not absolute but instead varied from nation to nation.[7]

The notion that different peoples might possess different degrees of homogeneity allowed Hitler to explain the political constitutions of various peoples on the basis of their supposed racial makeup. He thus suggested that a radical egalitarianism might be natural in an extremely homogeneous people since "men of completely similar characteristics . . . will be of necessity also alike in their achievement," while a hierarchical society might be natural in an extremely heterogeneous people since men of very different racial characteristics would spontaneously fall into unequal social strata.[8] Nevertheless, it seems clear that Hitler had doubts about the long-term viability of such societies. On the one hand, an overly homogeneous population (such as that of Sweden) lacked the natural inequality of ability necessary for individual genius to distinguish itself, while an overly heterogeneous population (like that of India) tended to dissolve into castes. In happy contrast to those extremes, the Germans were potentially heterogeneous enough to allow for the emergence of different talents and yet homogeneous enough to preserve their unity. Indeed, Hitler argued that "if there had been a complete blending of . . . [German] racial elements" the German people might actually "have been endowed with a smaller cultural capacity" since the superior as well as the inferior elements would have been homogenized. All that was necessary was for the German people to jettison inappropriate notions of class on the one side and mass on the other in order to allow the natural biological makeup of the *Volk* to determine its political constitution. While egalitarianism might be appropriate to Sweden and class society appropriate to India, the mixed political economy of national socialism was natural for Germany.

## II

An important key to understanding the role of race in Hitler's thought was his attitude toward sex. It is of course tempting to root this attitude in his childhood. On the one hand, Hitler's father, Alois, symbolized the

bankrupt dynastic system. The loyal bureaucrat, petty tyrant at home but fawning toady at work, was in a sense emblematic of all the paternal aristocratic authority figures against whose legacy Hitler revolted: Franz Joseph, Bismarck and, finally, Hindenburg. On the other hand, Hitler's mother seemed to symbolize the undifferentiated masses. It would be a mistake, however, to suggest that he "identified" with the position of either parent over and against the other. Rather, Hitler was clearly ambivalent toward both his parents and thus identified fully with neither. On the one side, Hitler feared his father as much as he loathed him. His relationship with Alois (and with the whole aristocratic caste he represented) was one of public fawning and private loathing. On the other side, he condescended to his mother as much as he loved her. His feelings with Klara were genuine, but they did not seem to include any real admiration for her as a person.[10]

There was thus an eerie parallel between the makeup of Hitler's personality and the structure of the volkish ideology he so enthusiastically proclaimed. After all, that ideology was as disenchanted with dynastic paternalism as it was alienated from socialist maternalism. If Weimar Germany was polarized between a "paternal" culture of the superego represented by Prussia and a "maternal" culture of the "id" embodied by Weimar, then Hitlerism signified the latest incarnation of the "inner-directed" ethos of the ego. Hitler would then be neither an ersatz father nor a consuming mother, but, as Klaus Theweleit suggested, an elder brother.[11]

But however valuable a psychohistorical approach is in itself, it is no substitute for intellectual history. If all culture is in fact a combination of social and individual endowments, then overemphasizing the latter is as mistaken as overemphasizing the former. In particular, the psychohistory of Hitlerism has too often reduced it to individual pathology, thus ignoring its larger cultural context. But the insights of psychohistory can be utilized by the kind of intellectual history this study represents if only we remember that individual psychology probably neither determines nor is determined by collective ideology. Rather, when individual needs correspond to social exigencies, the way is open for cross-fertilization.

Hitler's sexual attitudes, for example, dovetailed almost effortlessly with his particular brand of volkish nationalism. He was convinced that the preservation of racial values was ultimately dependent upon their reproduction. Just as he wanted a productive order that was neither capitalist nor communist, Hitler advocated a reproductive order that was neither traditional nor modern but somewhere in between. In an important passage in *Mein Kampf*, he thus wrote that "public life must be freed from . . . modern eroticism, just as it must be freed from all unmanly, prudish hypocrisy."[12] Hitler clearly associated "prudish hypocrisy" with the economic order dominated by the better classes, just as he associated "modern eroticism" with the political structure dominated by the masses. Moreover, just as the snobbery of the better classes drove the masses into the arms of the Marx-

ists, so prudery was driving the people into the seductive embrace of the sexual modernists. But this state of affairs was intolerable since, Hitler believed, both prudery and eroticism were essentially unnatural states of mind that frustrated the healthy self-preservation instinct that all peoples and individuals needed to perpetuate their existence.[13] This frustration of natural existence existed on several levels.

To start with, Hitler believed prudery and eroticism blocked the process of sexual selection essential for both a people's internal coherence and continued existence. Because, as we have seen, Hitler held that both the expansion and contractions of a people's power depended on the number of great minds it produced, and great minds were in turn the product of healthy bodies, the racial value of a people ultimately depended on the laws of sexual selection. The fate of Germany thus depended on "the most beautiful bodies" coming together.[14] But this coming together was frustrated by both the traditionalist and the modernist attitude toward sexuality.

For Hitler, the traditionalist attitude was shaped by the financial exigencies of the upper classes. The old class distinctions were thus reinforced by the sad fact that "fine clothes which everyone cannot buy" covered up beautiful bodies "which everyone can help build."[15] Moreover, Hitler complained, marriage was unnaturally put off for years and then contracted on the basis of "social compulsion" and "financial grounds."[16] In all this, then, "prudish hypocrisy" restricted the sex instinct to the narrow corridors of power and privilege and thus stood in the way of the natural working out of sexual attraction.

In contrast, the emerging "modernist" attitude toward sexuality represented the overflowing of the sex instinct beyond its natural bounds. If prudery covered up the body, eroticism destroyed it. Hitler thus spoke of the spreading dissolution of erotic life among the people, and darkly hinted at "mass contamination" by the values of "Sodom and Gomorrah." This dissolution took the form of the "bolshevistic" plagues of venereal disease and modern art, the first disintegrating the individual by disease and the second the sexual object by fragmenting it into a million pieces. Indeed, in this sense cubism was even worse than syphilis since the latter merely destroyed beautiful individuals whereas the former destroyed the very idea of beauty. Modern art thus represented the ultimate democratization of the sexual instinct into partial objects (Picasso), a democratization that destroyed the last vestige of discrimination between beauty and ugliness necessary for beautiful bodies to connect.[17]

Prudery and eroticism alike also prevented women from taking their proper place within the *Volk*, a place necessary to sustain the health of the national community. On the one hand, Hitler clearly believed that the traditionalists left women as a group outside the life of the people. In the prudish society of the better classes, it seemed, women remained encased in the dynastic family just as the reproductive function remained subordi-

nated to the exigencies of family life and thus unavailable to the larger needs of the *Volk*. This was reflected by the tendency of the better classes to emphasize their descent through the male line, thus leaving open the possibility of a "poisoning of the blood" by marriage to inferior females. "A hereditary monarch is a biological blunder," Hitler proclaimed during one of his endless table talks, "for a man of action regularly chooses a wife with essentially feminine qualities, and the son inherits his mother's mildness and passive disposition."[18] On the other hand, if the sexual politics of the old regime made the sexes too differentiated, that of the "bolshevized" masses went too far in the opposite direction by including women in everything and thus making them almost interchangeable with men. Hitler thus branded feminism as a leveling and thus essentially Marxist ideology of sexual homogenization which threatened the reproduction of the German people.[19]

In his address to women during the 1934 *Parteitag*, Hitler rejected the notion of equal rights for men and women, instead stressing the unequal "duties which nature imposes on all of us in common."[20] Since these duties were imposed by nature, they varied according to nature. But, for Hitler, anatomy determined duty even if it did not determine destiny. Since even within the *Volk*, "the blood components" of individuals were "subject to thousands of the finest differentiations," duties had to vary.[21] But while this variation was of a quantitative nature among men, it was of a qualitative nature between the sexes. Hitler thus preserved the old bourgeois notion of the separate spheres, modifying it, however, by putting both spheres at the service of public life. Reproduction was, for Hitler, no longer merely a concern of the family but a matter of politics. Eugenic intervention would henceforth accompany economic intervention in the ideal state. Hitler insisted that women give up the modesty that encased them in the aristocratic-bourgeois family, even as he demanded that they give up their modernist dreams of sexual equality. Both sexes, he believed, should engage in physical training and wear loose clothes to facilitate sexual selection, but women's gymnastics would be in preparation for motherhood while men's would be in preparation for war.[22]

Finally, Hitler believed that both conservative prudery and radical eroticism stood in the way of a sound population policy. We need to remember that he assumed a heathy people would inevitably tend to outgrow its territory. Such a people would then be faced with the necessity of either limiting its numbers or conquering new land. In either case, Hitler argued, a nation should take care to preserve its racial value. Birth control, as we have seen, was thus particularly unacceptable since it *randomly* limited the birth of individuals without knowing their potential value to the community.[23] Far better was the Spartan tradition of selecting the best children after they were born and exposing the rest. Meanwhile, a reinvigorated Germany should encourage parents with good racial elements to reproduce while

limiting the breeding rights of others. In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler thus suggested that financially comfortable but biologically inferior Germans forgo children of their own and instead adopt poor children of their "own nationality." Implicit here was a critique of both the traditional imperative to continue the dynastic line and the radical notion that all children are equal.[24]

## III

From what has been said so far, it should be obvious that Hitler possessed a "classical" theory of race which dovetailed nicely with his classical notions of political economy. Rejecting both the quasi-Christian perspective associated with the "throne and altar" and the relativistic perspective of the modernists, Hitler upheld a concept of biology that was both post-Christian and yet pre-Darwinian. On the one hand, he rejected the biblical paternalism represented by Hindenburg, the ersatz kaiser, a paternalism that encased both sex and race in an immutable divine (which was to say Prussian) order. On the other hand, Hitler also rejected the Marxist-feminism of the bohemian left, an ideology that appeared to level all sexual and racial distinctions. For Hitler, the Christian universe was *too* hierarchical just as the Darwinian universe was too egalitarian. While traditionalists upheld the Christian "great chain of being," modernists could take comfort in the Darwinian tendency to democratize nature. Christianity thus confined man to an eternal set of limits, while Darwinism threatened to abolish the concept of man altogether.[25]

Moreover, the Christian and the Darwinian universe were united in denying that humanity could control its own destiny. In the former, human events were subject to divine will; in the latter, they were subject to random changes in nature. Darwin's doctrine of natural selection, which suggested that human evolution was a directionless process in which random environmental change selected from among random variations, was thus as humbling as the biblical doctrine of divine providence. In this context, Hitler's boundless optimism stood in striking contrast to the "realistic" pessimism of Darwinism and Christianity alike. The German leader championed the view that humanity could indeed control its own evolutionary destiny. He equated the breeding of men with the breeding of dogs, ignoring the fact that the naturally selected "mongrel" is genuinely superior to the pedigreed distortions created by the whims of dog breeders. Imbued with the hubris of the philosophes, Hitler, like Marx before him, replaced the providence of God with the willful self-development of man. Implicit here was nothing less than a real commitment to value. If he was not a Christian, Hitler was nevertheless also not a nihilist. On the contrary, the very notion of self-development implied a distinction between higher and lower types and thus the basis for a kind of moralism. But if Marx's faith in human self-development justified the sacrifice of retrograde classes in bloody

revolution, Hitler's vision of the "highest humanity" legitimized the sacrifice of "inferior" peoples.[26]

The classical character of Hitler's racism also revealed itself in his emphasis on sexual (as opposed to natural) selection. It can even be said that this idea was the glue that held the whole racial theory together. While the Bible had set standards for defining species and natural selection seemed to undercut all standards, the concept of sexual selection implied that individuals possessed an inherent idea of "racial beauty" which led them to search out each other so that race had a kind of metaphysical existence. It was indeed not the individuals themselves but the hidden or "noumenal" racial elements within them that cried out to each other. The concept of sexual selection thus explains Hitler's otherwise bizarre (and widely ridiculed) attempt to equate miscegenation with bestiality. The only thing that his concept of the reproductive "self-seclusion of species" and his notion of the reproductive "self-seclusion" of races could have in common was the assumption that all beings carry around with them an inborn vision of a collective ideal. But once he postulated the existence of this ideal, Hitler felt compelled to bring it into existence. This aesthetic absolutism contrasted sharply with both the ethical absolutism of the Bible and the "situation aesthetics" implicit in the Darwinian notion of natural selection. If the former subordinated aesthetics to ethical monotheism, the latter relativized it out of existence by regarding it as a mere strategy of adaptation.[27]

Hitler thus advanced the principles of a natural aristocracy, bred by sexual selection, against both the dying nobility and its paternalistic sexuality on the one hand and the emerging culture of Weimar and its polymorphous lusts on the other. While the former threatened to violate the social body of the *Volk* by keeping it in chains, the latter threatened to fragment it into a million cubist pieces. Carving out a theoretical space between these two extremes, the German leader thus asserted a "virile" ideology reminiscent of the stern republicanism of Rousseau, Marat and the Jacobins. This was a radical totalitarian republicanism which implicitly condemned the middle class for its failures in 1848, 1866–71 and 1918. Thus, Hitler, who often compared himself to Napoleon, reportedly condemned the latter for taking the "imperial title" and putting "his brothers and sisters in posts of command" as well as for abandoning the "lovely Josephine . . . the model of the strictly Republican Frenchwoman" in order to marry a degenerate Hapsburg princess.[28] Like the Jacobins, Hitler simultaneously embraced the principle of social equality in the idea of careers open to talent, and the principle of biological inequality in the idea of separate sexual spheres. But he sought to reconcile these two notions by postulating an iron connection between performance and biological character, even if he had to distinguish between a masculine sphere in which biological character would be deduced from performance and a feminine sphere in which performance would be deduced from biological character.[29]

Hitler was thus close to the philosophes by radically distinguishing between the two sexes, even if he went further than most of them by questioning the naturalness of the family. A product of the most unnatural of families who refused to reproduce himself, it perhaps made sense that Hitler regarded the bourgeois family as a kind of sham. In his disillusion with (but secret defense of) the bourgeois family, he resembled none other than Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Hitler's rejection of the "bourgeois family," like Rousseau's, also reflected a desire to draw women out of their isolation and into a militant people where they would be subject to a system of education especially suited to their feminine character. Hitler echoed Rousseau in seeing women as the "Spartan" mothers and nurturers of future warrior-citizens, although he went further than Rousseau by emphasizing the role of sexual selection. Yet, for all this, Hitler remained within the Enlightenment paradigm of bio-politics. It was indeed a paradigm essential to unite an all too conservative upper and an all too radical lower class.[30]

## NOTES

1. Eberhard Jäckel, *Hitler's World View: A Blueprint for Power* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), p. 88.

2. See Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *Leftism Revisited: From de Sade and Marx to Hitler and Pol Pot* (Washington, DC: Regnery Gateway, 1990), pp. 151–152; A. James Gregor, *Contemporary Radical Ideologies: Totalitarian Thought in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Random House, 1968), p. 203.

3. Ernst Nolte, *Three Faces of Fascism: Action Française, Italian Fascism, National Socialism* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), p. 413.

4. Gregor, *Contemporary Radical Ideologies*, p. 207.

5. Otto Wagener, *Hitler—Memoirs of a Confidant*, ed. Henry Ashby Turner, Jr. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985), p. 214.

6. Adolph Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1943), pp. 395–98.

7. Adolph Hitler, *Hitler's Secret Book*. Introduction by Telford Taylor (New York: Grove Press, 1961), p. 6; *Hitlers zweites Buch*, p. 46.

8. Adolph Hitler, *The Speeches of Adolph Hitler*. Volume I, ed. Norman Baynes (London: Oxford University Press, 1942), pp. 1:16–17, 467.

9. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, p. 397.

10. For a discussion of Hitler's childhood, see Waite, *The Psychopathic God*, 124–44; August Kubizek, *The Young Hitler I Knew* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1955), is also invaluable.

11. See Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies, vol. 1: Women, Floods, Bodies, History* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), and vol. 2: *Male Bodies: Psychoanalyzing the White Terror* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989).

12. See Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, p. 256. From Theweleit's standpoint, the revolt against prudery becomes a struggle against the father's domination of objects of desire, while the fear of a polymorphous perverse eroticism becomes a fear of being devoured by the primeval mother.

13. See Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, p. 262, for his notion of a people's "healthy instinct."

14. Ibid., p. 412.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid., p. 247.
17. Ibid., pp. 246–263. See also Hitler, *Speeches*, vol. 1, for numerous references to degenerate art.
18. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, p. 247; *Table Talk*, p. 385.
19. See Hitler, *Speeches*, pp. 1:527–33.
20. Ibid., p. 530.
21. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, p. 442.
22. Ibid., pp. 412–14.
23. Hitler, *Secret Book*, pp. 13–24.
24. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, p. 404.
25. The notion that Darwin was somehow more "modern" than either Marx or Hitler is not as obvious as it might seem. Even a scholar like Hannah Arendt could make the breathtakingly wrong observation that Darwin believed that "natural movement" was "unilinear, moving in an infinitely progressing direction," thus making Darwinism into a kind of biological Marxism. Yet, it is precisely unilinearity that the theory of natural selection makes impossible by proclaiming that evolution is determined by chance and is thus not predictable. See Arendt, *Totalitarianism*, p. 463.
26. In the "folkish state," men will breed men as they once bred "dogs, horses and cats." See Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, p. 405.
27. Ibid., pp. 284–89; Jäckel, *Hitler's World View*, pp. 88–90. Sexual selection (which underpins the notion of an inborn drive to racial perfection) stands midway between Christian salvation and Darwinian relativism. See Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), p. xx; Darwin, *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 259; Ernst Mayer, *Animal Species and Evolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), p. 6.
28. See Hitler, *Table Talk*, pp. 383–84; Wagener, *Memoirs*, p. 25.
29. Hitler, *Speeches*, p. 1:476; Nolte, *Three Faces of Fascism*, p. 413.
30. See Joel Schwartz, *The Sexual Politics of Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984); Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The First and Second Discourses* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1964), pp. 120–21. For comparisons of Jacobinism with Hitlerism, see von Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *Leftism Revisited*, p. 144, and Nolte, *Three Faces of Fascism*, p. 411.

# 6

# Anti-Semitism

The role of anti-Semitism in Hitler's worldview has been overestimated by some historians, just as it has been underestimated by others. While hatred of the Jews was not the only element of Hitlerism, it was also not just one more element. Anti-Semitism clearly stood at the very center of national socialist thought. Just as Hitler grounded political economy in biology, he grounded biology in the anti-Semitic distinction between the Aryan and Jew, a distinction that was ultimately more ethical than economic or biological. That is why Hitler, in waging war against the Jews, appropriated the language of religion in what was essentially a messianic struggle to prevent the destruction of the world itself.[1]

Now, there have been at least two ways of understanding this anti-Semitism. The more common way has been to see it as the culmination of a long history of Judeophobia which is particularly "German." Another, less common approach is to see it as a variant of modern (but not necessarily German) totalitarian ideology that just happened to be directed against the Jews. While the first methodology traces hatred of the Jews across time in a "diachronic" manner, the second compares anti-Semitism with other modern ideologies in a "synchronic" manner.[2] Combining both methodologies, we are able to see that while religious enmity may have preordained Hitler's choice of the Jews as the universal enemy, secular exigencies determined the weapons he used to fight them. In this chapter, we therefore have the responsibility of both describing and explaining Nazi anti-Semitism within the framework developed in earlier chapters.

## I

If race represented the metaphysics of the mixed economy, anti-Semitism represented its religion. Ultimately, as we have seen, Nazism claimed to

embody a kind of natural law and Hitler himself was a kind of latter-day physiocrat. "Eternal Nature," he proclaimed, "inexorably avenges the infringement of her commands."[3] Just as the only type of aristocracy that Hitler could tolerate was a natural aristocracy, the only kind of creed he could accept was a kind of natural religion akin to that of Franklin or Rousseau. Thus, while he paid lip service to the notion of a German Christianity which proclaimed Christ Aryan and repudiated the Old Testament as Jewish, Hitler actually rejected any form of the Christian religion if only because traditional religion was reminiscent of the doctrinal disputes between Protestantism and Catholicism that had divided the German people.[4]

But if he rejected Christianity even in its Wagnerian form, Hitler was not an atheist either. In a dinner conversation, he reportedly equated God with "the dominion of natural laws throughout the whole universe," a pronouncement completely consistent with what he said elsewhere. Hitler needed a God close enough to give him legitimacy but not so close as to preclude his acting in His name. The religion of Hitlerism was thus essentially a kind of deism. Conversely, atheism was nothing other than the denial of natural law as Hitler understood it. Within this context, the Nazis could simultaneously fight against Christianity on the one side and Bolshevism on the other by denouncing the former as a false theism even as they denounced the latter as atheism.[5]

Hitler thus saw himself as a kind of secular Jesus, the new messiah who represented "nature and nature's God." But if the Aryan was nothing less than natural (and thus religious) man personified, the Jew represented the unnatural and hence atheistic principle of the counter-man. From the beginning of his political career, Hitler saw the Jews as the personification of a great lie which denied the sovereignty of the laws of nature (and thus God). Again and again, Hitler associated the Jews with lying. The Jews' "whole existence," he maintained, was "based on a continuous lie."[6] In particular, the Jews lied by pretending to be a mere religion or confession which could be absorbed into the secularized nation-state like any other variety of Christianity when in fact they were an unassimilable people with international ambitions.[7]

For Hitler, the Jews had to deceive others about their real nature because that nature was itself unnatural. In a real sense, the children of Israel represented nothing less than a secularized version of the demonic lie Hitlerism was supposed to exorcise. In other words, having transformed God into nature, Hitler transformed the devil into Jewish counter-nature. It was precisely here that German anti-Semitism differed from its Russian and French analogues. While the latter always preserved a genuine Christian and thus counterrevolutionary component, the former was ultimately secular and thus truly revolutionary. What Hitler wanted from the beginning of his career was thus an anti-Semitism of reason based on some kind of natural law.[8]

As we have seen, it was one of the main characteristics of the thought we choose to call "Enlightened" that it sought to fill the gap left by the dissolution of the Christian worldview with a comprehensive worldview of its own. From the beginning, the philosophes and their nineteenth-century successors constructed what Jeffrey Burton Russell has called "secular theodicies," explanations of good and evil which preserved older Christian notions if only in an attenuated form.[9] Thinkers like Marx and Freud (especially in his early work) thus built up secular substitutes for religion, titanic intellectual systems that raised parochial human concerns to cosmic importance. In this context, Hitler's anti-Semitism appears as a "secular theodicy" whose structure resembles that of Marxism and psychoanalysis in many ways. This can be demonstrated by briefly reviewing how Freud and Marx dealt with the problem of evil before returning to Hitler's anti-Semitic theories.[10]

## II

To understand Marxism as a "secular theodicy," it is necessary to remember that it replaced the idea of God with the concept of labor as the sole creative force in the universe. As Isaac Balbus has noted, Marx held that "nothing . . . is historically or logically prior to productive activity" so that "humans become human only when and insofar as they begin to produce."[11] If Christianity saw evil resulting from humanity's estrangement from its God, Marx and Engels saw evil arising from the human race's alienation from its own productiveness. In this sense, both the Christian and the Marxist account of suffering were "dialectical" since each held that the creative force gave rise to the very conditions that perverted it. In the case of the former, God created the devil who was able to revolt precisely because free will was part of the condition of creation. In the case of the latter, human labor created the possibility of alienation precisely because the division of labor into classes emerged logically out of the growth of productivity.[12]

But if Marxism began with a general theory that grounded evil's emergence in the appearance of a division of labor, it gradually reduced this theory to a specific account that rooted suffering in the appearance of *capitalism*. It was thus capitalist and not earlier societies that alienated the worker from the "charm" of work.[13] For Marx, capitalist production appeared uniquely evil because its laws ran in opposition to those of all earlier modes of production. While "conservation of the old modes of production in unaltered form was . . . the first condition of existence for all earlier industrial classes," the capitalist "cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production."[14]

In *Capital*, Marx outlined the unique character of capitalism even more thoroughly. All other modes of production, he argued, were founded on the notion of production for use. They were consequently "natural" in the Aristotelian sense of the word. While the pre-capitalist modes produced commodities for use even with the rise of exchange and money since these interventions merely facilitated natural production within an ever more complex division of labor, the capitalist mode produced commodities for money alone. Since the object of capitalism was no end but money, which fueled more production in order to make more money in a never-ending cycle, capitalist production was fundamentally "unnatural" from an Aristotelian perspective. The taking of interest was thus both the embryonic and essential form of capitalism, one significantly long associated with the Jew.[15]

Capitalism's unnatural character arose from its perversion of the natural flow of production from one in which the accent was on use to one in which the accent was on money as an end in itself. This perversion transformed a process with a natural ending into an unnatural process without any ending. The unnatural and never-ending character of capitalist production thus suggested a kind of economic vampirism in which capital or "dead labour" was "vampire-like" since it "lives only by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks." Marx's characterization of capital as a "dead" form of labor was of immense polemical importance since it denied that the capitalists possessed an independent factor of production, implying instead that they were nothing more than a class of vampires whose existence was based on "sucking living labour" from the workers. Moreover, the spread of capitalism resembled a kind of vampirism insofar as it was an unnatural, unlimited process which must progress geometrically until it transforms the entire world.[16]

There is little doubt but that the effect of Marx's argument was to demonize the bourgeoisie as a class. But precisely because the evil they created was merely a perversion of the good embodied in human labor, Marx believed that their eventual removal would spontaneously restore the natural order of things. The intervention of the proletariat was thus supposed to reassemble in a higher form the natural production of earlier societies, ending humanity's estrangement from its own godlike productive power. Marx saw revolution as a way to reestablish the natural order of things, thus restoring man to paradise on earth.

Freud's so-called seduction theory of mental illness, which he abandoned early in his career as a psychoanalyst, provides another classic example of a "secular theodicy." Before he accepted the idea of a natural infantile sexuality with which he is generally associated, Freud held that children were sexually innocent. When his early psychoanalytic work first led him to postulate a sexual etiology of the "neuroses," this assumption of innocence was central in shaping his preliminary ideas. In several papers

published in 1896, the most detailed being his "Further Remarks on the Neuro-Psychoses of Defense," Freud developed the notion that the seduction of children played a key role in the generation of mental disturbance.[17]

Freud's seduction theory was founded on what might be called a "Marxist" conception of sex. That conception understood reproductive sexuality as innate and perverse sexuality as acquired. While the former appeared natural and inevitable unless disturbed by molestation, the latter seemed the unnatural result of trauma. The seduction theory thus denied the ultimate reality of perverse and childhood sexuality. In that theory, perversion had no fundamental basis in the instincts. Even when a child did exhibit a sexuality by seducing other children, Freud explained this away by assuming that the seducer must have originally been seduced by an adult.[18] In the "Neuro-Psychoses of Defense," he distinguished between children who are seduced and eventually became hysterics, and children who seduce and eventually become obsessives. Unlike the hysterics who were traumatized by being seduced, the obsessives were apparently traumatized by seducing and thus enjoying sex with other children. While the existence of these obsessives seemed to contradict Freud's original assumption that children had no sexual instinct, it was precisely for this reason that he argued that child perverts must have been seduced previously. Freud thus claimed that all obsessives were originally hysterics and retain the remnants of the hysteria originating in their initial traumatization. The desire of child perverts, like that of perverts in general, was thus somehow unreal and unnatural. It was a "lie," a kind of "false consciousness."[19]

Freud's seduction theory suggested that perversion (under which Freud seems to have subsumed childhood sexuality) not only created neurosis but more perversion. Perversion had its origin only in earlier perversion. This was the "vampire" theory of seduction, where perversion creates more perversion and neurosis more neurosis. The "infection," Freud argued, could be spread from child to child, and from generation to generation. The seduction theory thus saw mental suffering (evil) as the result of a distortion of the natural order of things. This distortion had no real life of its own but acted as a vampiristic force which lived off the psychic labor (libido) of individuals and spread from one person to another like some demonic plague.[20]

Precisely because his seduction theory was structured as a secular theodicy, the early Freud was essentially optimistic. Since his theory assumed that reproductive sex was inevitable unless aborted by trauma, exposure and treatment of the trauma would restore the natural order of things. By assuming a natural sexuality and blaming the perversion of that sexuality on contact with already perverted individuals, the seduction theory suggested a simple solution to the problem of mental suffering: breaking the cycle of molestation. The physician could thus accomplish an internal revolution by freeing the psyche from the parasitical forces that

held it in chains. Thus, once again, the natural order would be spontaneously restored.[21]

## III

One of the assumptions of Jeffrey Burton Russell's recent book on the devil is that cultures need a sense of evil in order to refrain from doing evil. But the Hitlerian experience clearly shows that an obsession with the demonic may lead to demonic behavior. In *Mein Kampf*, Adolph Hitler constructed a profoundly coherent explanation for human suffering, an explanation in some ways reminiscent of the Marxian and Freudian schemes delineated above. Like Marx and the early Freud, Hitler replaced God with an idealized version of man. But where Marxism saw productivity and Freudianism genitality, Hitlerism saw creativity as the mark of humanity. Hitler's Aryan was thus supposed to embody an ideal of creative work which in some ways represented a fusion of the economic and the aesthetic. In *Mein Kampf*, it was the Aryan who brought forth the productive and reproductive forces necessary to form cultures and the state structures that protected them.[22]

For Hitler, cultures always occupied a specific territory. This territorial character of culture was above all evident in architecture which, even more than music, appeared as the highest expression of humanity in the Hitlerian worldview. Hitler's tendency to judge cultures by their architecture is significant because the building of great monuments and cities, more than any other form of art (including music), required the conquest of living space. As we have seen, Hitler believed that when the population of Aryan peoples expanded in the living space they conquered, they brought forth great minds who raised the cultural and technological level necessary for still further territorial expansion. Of course, in doing all these things, Hitler's Aryans were merely functioning within the natural order of things.[23]

It is in this context that we can assess the Hitlerian conception of the Jew as the demonic enemy. Clearly, the Jews as Hitler understood them resembled both Marx's capitalists and Freud's seducers. To the old notion of the Jew as usurer, Hitler (like Streicher) added the unsavory image of the Jew as pervert. But in the end, he saw both Jewish exploitation and Jewish seduction as mere tactics in the service of a far more sinister strategy. Like all vampires, Hitler believed, the Jews' real problem was their fundamental lack of creativity and thus their lack of humanity.[24]

Of course, Hitler's condemnation of the Jewish people for their cultural sterility was not a charge that could be answered by merely pointing to the number of Jews who had won this or that academic prize. He was not so much claiming that individual Jews were worthless as that the Jewish people as a whole had no national culture. Where, Hitler asked mockingly

from almost the beginning of his career, was the Jewish state, the Jewish style of architecture, the Jewish type of city? "Foreign peoples," he proclaimed mockingly in an earlier speech, "foreign workmen build his temples, it is foreigners who create and work for him."[25]

While commonplace logic might trace the Jews' cultural deficiencies to their lack of territory, it was precisely here that Hitler attempted to reverse the usual logic by tracing the Jews' inability to occupy a territory of their own to their inability to form a genuine national culture. Jewish rootlessness was thus not the result of statelessness; Jewish statelessness was the result of an intrinsic rootlessness. The Jews, in a phrase, had no real place in the natural world. They were, he believed, inconceivably evil because they were immeasurably unnatural. For Hitler, the Jewish people were nothing less than the embodiment of *death* itself.[26]

Hitler saw the death-like character of the Jews above all in their inability to "work." According to the radically anti-Semitic theory outlined in *Mein Kampf*, the Jewish people never possessed the essentially human capacity for creative work. Remember that Hitler regarded labor as a fusion of the individual and the social principle, a fusion best realized among the Aryans but necessary to all peoples if they were to survive. While the holism of earlier societies may have retarded the development of creative work by encumbering individual initiative, the Jews represented the incarnation of a radical individualism which taken to its logical conclusion would end human existence itself. In the Jew, Hitler thus claimed, "the will to self-sacrifice does not go beyond the individual's naked instinct for self-preservation." From this point of view, the very expression "Jewish people" was actually a contradiction in terms since the Jews were incapable of the altruism and thus the idealism necessary to preserve a people. Thus, Hitler argued that the apparent unity of the Jews was only a negative, a temporary phenomenon he compared to the "herd instinct" which led "to mutual support only as long as" there was "a common danger." The danger over, Hitler said, the Jews would turn into a "horde of rats, fighting bloodily among themselves." In Hitler's way of looking at things, the Jews represented a reversion to an individualistic phase of life far below that of the most primitive man and really equivalent to that of bacteria or viruses.[27]

For Hitler, then, the very existence of the Jew seemed to violate the fundamental laws of nature as he described them. How could an essentially individualistic crowd come together to form a people which if not a genuine race-in-itself was clearly a race-for-itself? The answer, Hitler believed, was that the Jews were a kind of vampire. From that standpoint, which awarded race value on the basis of national creativity, the Jews appeared to have zero race value. Unable to exploit a specific territory by working, they should have disappeared according to that natural law delineated in chapter 4. But somehow, Hitler believed, the Jews short-circuited nature and escaped the cycle of creative work by injecting themselves into the social body of

productive peoples everywhere. Like a fungus, which takes root in a chance crack in the skin, the Jews took root in social fissures and began to exploit them. They were, Hitler told Otto Wegener, "a parasitic genus."[28]

But it is just here that his anti-Semitism effortlessly dovetailed with the critique of communism and capitalism described above. The Jews, he argued, created both ideologies by accentuating the differences between radicals and conservatives in order to destroy the national will to resist. Thus, the Stock-Exchange Jew cooperated with the Bolshevik Jew in order to polarize society by inflaming the passions of the better classes and the workers alike.[29] In this sense, both aristocratic pseudo-nationalism and socialist internationalism could be dismissed as essentially Jewish and thus unnatural. Moreover, just as the Jews were radicalizing the people's sexual life by spreading the poison of feminism and perversion, the Jews were also marrying into a ruling class that believed "every department store Jewess" was "considered fit to augment the offspring of His Highness." The Jewish attack consequently took the form of both a direct and an indirect seduction of the Aryan, the former by intermarrying with Germans and the latter by encouraging race mixing between non-Jews of unequal value![30] Under this assault, Hitler believed, the sexual economy of both the aristocracy and the workers was becoming ever more unnatural. Meanwhile, Hitler believed, state after state was falling sick with the Jewish "virus."

From Hitler's standpoint, then, the Jews were a ghost people who artificially and vampiristically lived off the economy—and the libido—of living states. Utterly devoid of either race or personality values, the Jewish people exhibited no creativity except the creativity to devise ways to live off others. Without a territory of their own, they injected themselves into the territories of other people. They were both everywhere and nowhere. Thus, Hitler claimed, the Jews developed ideologies like Marxism which concealed their real nature and thus made it easier for them to gain control of the host peoples whose productive forces they exploited. The Jews created, in other words, a kind of "false consciousness" which deceived peoples into acting against their national self-interest. This the Jew did "not only" by "divorcing the social idea from the national, but" by "actually representing them as utterly contradictory" when in fact they were identical.[31] Ultimately, though, this parasitism must destroy the nations from which it draws its strength and thus destroy itself. In the end, without any victims on which to feed, the Jewish parasite must also die. Thus, Hitler warned in a chilling passage in *Mein Kampf*, "if . . . the Jew is victorious over the other peoples of the world, his crown will be the funeral wreath of humanity."[32]

While Hitler's distinction between Aryan and Jew has been characterized as a kind of Manicheanism, it represented in fact a secularization of the Christian distinction between God and the devil. In Hitlerism, the Jews were not a creative but an essentially sterile and somehow unnatural

force. But this very fact allowed Hitler, like Marx and the early Freud, to be essentially optimistic. If he expressed the sentiment that "a people that is rid of its Jews returns spontaneously to the natural order," it was precisely because he regarded them as a perversion rather than a part of nature. To say that the Jews inspired both communism and capitalism was therefore to damn both ideologies (and the sexual, racial and economic policies linked to them) as unnatural. For Hitler, national socialism was natural socialism.[33]

## IV

Having admitted that Hitlerism was after all only one of several very different "secular theodicies," let us not make the mistake of thinking that its demonization of the Jew (as opposed to some other group) was purely arbitrary. There is no doubt that, for Hitler, the Jews were a very logical choice to play the role of devil. Hitlerism was after all a metaphysics of nationalism which sought to give the notion of a unified German people a foundation in nature itself. But to proclaim a Greater Germany as the only "natural" solution to the German question, Hitler had to postulate an iron link between nationality and territory. It was precisely from this standpoint that the concept of a landless diaspora appeared inconceivably monstrous and unnatural. But (with the possible exception of the Gypsies) the only diaspora Hitler knew was the Jews.

Hitler's stigmatization of the Jews as unnatural was thus, to a very real extent, a rejection of the concept of a dispersed people. As Eurocentric as Marx, Hitler pretended that the Jews were the only real diaspora and conveniently forgot about the Parsees or the Armenians. Like the philosophes, he insisted on elevating Western concerns to cosmic significance. A few miserable pawnbrokers and tailors of central Vienna were thus transformed into the minions of a universal evil that threatened the existence of the furthest star.[34]

But if it was really the diaspora character of the Jew that was the basis for Hitler's anti-Semitism, then it is clear why that anti-Semitism was so necessary. For Hitler, like his volkish predecessors, hatred of the Jews was nothing more than German self-hatred projected outward to a similar object. Remember that we cannot speak of a French or Russian diaspora in the same way that we can speak of a German diaspora. That diaspora existed from Alsace to Transylvania to the Baltic, interpenetrating the living space of many other nationalities. The Germans, too, had been guests in others peoples' domains. The Germans, too, had never formed a true nation-state. So Hitler's metaphysics of Germanic nationalism also had as its task the covering up of this dirty little secret by projecting the degraded image of German powerlessness onto the Jews. The capacity to form a state was hailed as the quintessential Germanic characteristic, but one whose

expression was blocked by the internationalist Jew. German failure thus had a Jewish alibi, German unnaturalness a Jewish cause.

This fear of diaspora was one more symptom of the "Enlightenment" character of Hitlerism. Against the dying internationalism of old Europe and the emerging globalism of the United States and the Soviet Union, Hitlerism sought to stabilize German nationalism for all eternity by giving it a foundation in the soil. Here, Hitler was warring as much against the rootless universalism of the Hapsburgs as against the coming globalism of some as yet unguessable "new world order." With loathing, he turned away from the image of the cosmopolitan Jew. And yet, ironically, Hitler sought to replace Jewish universalism with a Germanic universalism by making the struggle against the cosmopolitan Jew the common duty of all nations.

## V

But if Hitlerism, like Marxism and Freudianism, constituted a secular theodicy, how was it related to these older ideologies? Certainly, there is no question of influence here. Rather, we have a situation comparable to the relationship among a bat's, a bird's and a fly's wing: a structural rather than a genetic relationship. The concept of evil put forth in *Capital*, *Mein Kampf* and the "Neuro-Psychoses of Defense" represented the adaptation of three radically different styles of thought to what was in the broadest sense the same intellectual niche: namely, the theoretical space between Christian absolutism and post-Christian relativism.

Ethically, the Christian universe was one of moral absolutes. The Bible posited an eternal distinction between good and evil, a distinction expressed in the dichotomy between God and the devil. But because God pronounced creation to be "very good," there was an ambiguity in the relationship between evil and nature in Western thought. Since Christianity rejected Manicheanism, evil appeared as an unnatural distortion of nature, a kind of vampirism or parasitism that lived on creation. As C. S. Lewis pointed out, in Christianity "good and evil . . . are not on all fours."[35] Dualism thus existed but only within a monist framework. It was precisely this limited dualism that reappeared in those ersatz Christianities that stigmatized the capitalist, the pervert and the Jew as modern-day vampires.

Hitler's nightmarish vision of the parasitical Jew thus occupied the theoretical space between *The Book of Genesis* and *The Origin of Species*. The pseudo-medical rhetoric in which he described the Jews as "fission-fungi," "spongers," "viruses," "tuberculi" and "abscesses" on the social body depended on a conception of absolute evil which was, however, thoroughly secular. But the advent of Darwinism marked the triumph of a far more radical monism which threatened to efface any distinction between "natural" and "unnatural" and therefore between good and evil. Darwinian

theory relativized nature by making success the only criterion for evaluating a mode of life. Darwin himself recognized parasitism as merely one evolutionary strategy among others as long as the host "be not exterminated." All parasitism, in any event, tended toward symbiosis since mutual advantage would confer the greatest likelihood of survival. In this context, Marx's notion of bourgeois unproductiveness, like Hitler's idea of Jewish sterility and Freud's early concept of perversion, seems like the fragments of a transitional style of thought which was essentially post-Christian but pre-Darwinian. In a sense, Marx, Freud and Hitler were a legacy of that Enlightenment failure of nerve which sought to displace divine law only to guiltily reincarnate it in some sort of "physiocracy."[36]

Around 1897, Freud began to replace his seduction with a more Darwinian "oedipal" theory based on the assumption of a natural "polymorphous perverse" childhood sexuality. Where the first theory saw perversion as a purely "negative" phenomenon resulting from the distortion of reproductive sexuality, the second gave perversion a "positive" foundation in the widely diffused erogenous zones of childhood. Psychoanalysis thus moved in the direction of relativism, conceding the naturalness and ultimate similarity of adult and child, male and female, reproductive and perverse sexuality. Moreover, by admitting that humankind's most perverse instincts were natural, Freud's new theory confessed that they were probably incurable. Psychoanalysis could no longer optimistically promise to end what now seemed like an eternal contradiction between sexuality and the more restricted reproductive demands of the social order. Evil thus became a more complex and intractable problem, and one firmly rooted in nature. Within this framework, Freud joined Nietzsche (and H. G. Wells) in what was essentially a critique of secular theodicy for reproducing the illusions of Christian theodicy.

## NOTES

1. For different assessments of the role of anti-Semitism in Nazism, see Arno Mayer, *Why Did the Heavens Not Darken? The "Final Solution" in History* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1990), pp. 90–109; Lucy Dawidowicz, *The War against the Jews, 1933–1945* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975), pp. 3–22; Sebastian Haffner, *The Meaning of Hitler* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), pp. 81–85; Sarah Gordon, *Hitler, Germans, and the "Jewish Question"* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 91–118. Jäckel, *Hitler's World View*, pp. 47–66, is also useful.

2. Writers like Shirer and Viereck, cited above, have thus taken the more diachronic "Luther to Hitler" approach, while scholars such as Arendt and Fest represent a more synchronic perspective. See also Lucy Dawidowicz, *War against the Jews: 1933–1945* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975), p. 23.

3. For example, see Adolph Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1943), p. 65.

4. Ibid., pp. 561–63.

5. Adolph Hitler, *Hitler's Table Talk, 1941–1944: His Private Conversations*, trans. Norman Cameron and R. H. Stevens (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1973), p. 6.

6. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, pp. 305, 307.

7. See, for example, Hitler's 1919 letter in Adolph Hitler, *Hitler's Letters and Notes*, comp. Werner Maser (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), p. 214; *Mein Kampf*, p. 306.

8. In his letter of 1919, he thus rejects religious pogroms in favor of a secular policy of removal (Enfernung). See Hitler, *Letters and Notes*, p. 215.

9. Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Mephistopheles: The Devil in the Modern World* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986), pp. 142, 156.

10. For an attempt to find an ethnic basis for the thought of Marx and Freud that obviously does not apply to Hitler, see John Murray Cuddihy, *The Ordeal of Civility: Freud, Marx, Levi-Strauss, and the Jewish Struggle with Modernity* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1974).

11. Isaac Balbus, *Marxism and Domination: A Neo-Hegelian, Feminist, Psychoanalytic Theory of Sexual, Political, and Technological Liberation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), p. 13.

12. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology* (New York: International Publishers, 1985), pp. 39–57.

13. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (New York: International Publishers, 1948), p. 16.

14. Ibid., p. 12.

15. Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, trans. Ben Fowkes (New York: Vintage, 1977), pp. 125–280, especially pp. 252–53, 267. See Aristotle, *The Politics*, trans. by T. A. Sinclair (New York: Penguin Books, 1992), pp. 75–87.

16. In *Capital*, Marx thus notes that "the form of circulation within which money is transformed into capital contradicts all the previously developed laws bearing on the nature of commodities, value, money and even circulation itself. What distinguishes this form from that of the simple circulation of commodities is the inverted order of succession of the two antithetical processes, sale and purchase" (p. 258). In a sense, sale has become parasitical in relation to purchase, which ties into the vampire-like character of the capitalist process. Also see *Capital*, p. 242, for the vampire metaphor.

17. Freud's relevant 1896 papers are "Further Remarks on the Neuro-Psychoses of Defense," "Heredity in the Aetiology of the Neuroses" and "The Aetiology of Hysteria" in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, vol. 3: Early Psycho-analytic Publications*, ed. James Strachey and Anna Freud (London: Hogarth, 1962).

18. Freud, "Neuro-Psychoses of Defense," in ibid., pp. 163–64. Jeffrey Masson and Alice Miller, among others, have defended the seduction theory and criticized Freud's later abandonment of it. In an earlier article, I criticized Masson's and Miller's arguments in some detail by pointing out the extremely conservative character of the theory. More recently, Paul Robinson has questioned whether Freud ever had a fully developed seduction theory by suggesting that it did not apply to all areas of mental suffering. What I am suggesting here contradicts Robinson's argument by pointing out how comprehensive Freud's early effort

really was. See Jeffrey Masson, *The Assault on Truth: Freud's Suppression of the Seduction Theory* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1984); Alice Miller, *Thou Shalt Not Be Aware: Society's Betrayal of the Child* (New York: New American Library, 1984); Lawrence Birken, "From Seduction Theory to Oedipus Complex," *New German Critique* 43 (1988); Paul Robinson, *Freud and His Critics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 157–74.

19. See "Neuro-Psychoses of Defense," pp. 168–69, for the role of seduction in the genesis of obsessional neurosis, and pp. 183–84 for the relation of seduction to paranoia.

20. Freud, "The Aetiology of Hysteria," in *Standard Edition*, p. 3:209.

21. A comparison of Marx's external and Freud's internal revolution may be found in Henri Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious: The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychology* (New York: Basic Books, 1970), pp. 237–40, although it is the later Freud that is being compared with Marx.

22. For Hitler's concept of the creative Aryan, see *Mein Kampf*, pp. 296–300.

23. References to architecture and the central role it played in shaping Hitler's worldview can be found scattered throughout *Mein Kampf*; see especially p. 34 where he calls it "along with music . . . the queen of the arts."

24. For a somewhat different comparison of Hitlerism and Marxism, see Moishe Postone, "Anti-Semitism and National Socialism: Notes on the German Reaction to 'Holocaust,' " *New German Critique* 19 (Winter 1980). Postone argues that "modern anti-semitism involves a biologization of capitalism" (p. 112). References to the Jew as seducer abound in *Mein Kampf*, the most notorious of which is found on p. 325 in the Houghton Mifflin translation. Here, Hitler paints a picture of the Jewish youth, whose black hair marks him as the child of darkness, waiting to ravish the Aryan maiden whose blond hair is a crown of light. The Jew is thus a true vampire since the latter, too, not only defiles his victims by contaminating them with his blood, but also robs them of the divine gift of life itself. "The blood," as Dracula says, "is the life!"

25. Quoted from Adolph Hitler, *The Speeches of Adolph Hitler*, ed. Norman Baynes. Volume I (London: Oxford University Press, 1942), p. 1:30. This was a consistent charge since 1920. See Phelps, "Hitlers 'Grundlegende' Rede," p. 404. The German text of Hitler's 1920 speech reads "*Er* [the Jew] *hat sich seine Tempel erbauen lassen von fremden Baumeisten*."

26. In Dietrich Eckart's posthumously published *Der Bolshevismus von Moses bis Lenin: Zwiegesprach zwischen Adolph Hitler und Mir* (Munich: Verlag Franz Eher, 1924), p. 5, Hitler appears as a kind of astronomer who has discovered the Jew as the hidden force [*geheime Kraft*] in the universe. This dialogue is further discussed in Nolte, *Three Faces of Fascism*, pp. 329, 392–93, 406, and Engelman, "Dietrich Eckart," pp. 233–38.

27. See Phelps, "Hitlers 'grundlegende' Rede," pp. 400–405, further discussed in Jäckel, *Hitler's World View*, pp. 50–51. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, pp. 301–2. For a more detailed discussion of Hitler's juxtaposition of individualism and Judaism, see Dumont, *Essays in Individualism*, pp. 167–69.

28. Wagener, *Memoirs*, pp. 63–65.

29. Hitler, *Speeches*, p. 1:29.

30. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, p. 247.

31. Hitler, *Speeches*, p. 1:15.

32. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, p. 65.

33. See Hitler, *Table Talk, pp. 314, and Nolte, Three Faces of Fascism*, pp. 329–30, for a discussion of Hitler's belief that the Jews were unnatural.

34. In this context, it is significant that two other thinkers who have struggled with the concept of diaspora have been accused of anti-Semitism. I am thinking here of Arnold Toynbee and Fernand Braudel. It is significant that, like Hitler, both Toynbee and Braudel tended to link cultures to specific ecologies or territories, thus putting into question whether the Jews could be considered a real civilization after all. Unlike Hitler, however, both Toynbee and Braudel placed the Jews within the natural order of things by recognizing that they were not the *only* diaspora culture that needed to be explained and thus rejecting the thesis of Jewish singularity at the heart of radical anti-Semitism. See Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), pp. 2:802–25, and Arnold Toynbee, *A Study of History*, vol. 1: The Genesis of Civilizations (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 90–92. See also Stoianovich, *French Historical Method*, pp. 51–56.

35. C. S. Lewis, *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdman's, 1970), p. 23.

36. Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), p. 219. Also see Rather, *Reading Wagner*, pp. 171–88, and Jäckel, *Hitler's World View*, pp. 58–59, for a further analysis of Hitler's concept of Jewish parasitism.

# 7

# Creators, Preservers, Destroyers: Hitler's Geopolitics

A central problem in understanding the career of Adolph Hitler is determining the relationship between his geopolitical theory and its practice. Although a vast amount of literature exists on this subject, it has not completely cleared up the inconsistencies between Hitler the theoretician and Hitler the politician.[1] Part of the problem may be that most students of national socialist ideology have regarded the dichotomy between Aryan and Jew as the essential framework for understanding Hitler's worldview.[2] But Hitler actually advanced a three-fold distinction of humanity among culture creators, preservers and destroyers.[3] A study of this tripartite theory of culture, I would argue, helps clear up some of the contradictions in Hitler's geopolitics and its practice during World War II. In particular, such a study demonstrates that while his geopolitics was more flexible than we might expect, it too was ultimately limited by theoretical presuppositions.

## I

Hitler's division of "mankind into three groups" was even more basic than race, just as race was more basic than nationality. The tripartite division alone provided a coherent underpinning for Hitler's entire world picture. It is of course clear that the Aryans constituted the first and the Jews the third group. But who belonged in the second? While Jeffrey Herf noted that Hitler "assigned" the role of culture preservers to the Japanese, this assertion is somewhat misleading. While Japan was clearly a culture-preserving state in Hitler's scheme, not all culture preservers were Japanese. In fact, from a logical point of view, every branch of humanity that was neither Aryan nor Jewish had to fall into the culture preserver category.[4]

Nevertheless, what Hitler said about the Japanese more or less applied to the whole category. Culture preservers like the people of Japan were continually assimilating the heritage of the Aryans, but that heritage soon "rigidified" unless reinvigorated by another dose of Aryan influence. While the Aryans—and the Jews—were essentially dynamic, the culture preservers were thus basically static. Even if they adopted the forms of the Aryan, they could not adapt the Aryan dynamism which generated the constant creation of new forms. Progress belonged to the culture creators alone. The Japanese, Hitler notes, had adapted "European technology and culture" although they could not adapt the European ability to create new culture constantly. It is also important to note that Hitler did not regard all culture preservers as equal. On the contrary, they represented a series of peoples whose abilities varied, ranging from highly developed societies like the Japanese to simple societies like the Bushmen, with the Slavs somewhere in the middle. Yet, this broad range of peoples of unequal "race value" all fit into the broad category of culture preservers.[5]

The Jews, in contrast, represented a destructive force which was the "mightiest counterpart to the Aryan."[6] In this sense, these destroyers were as above the preservers as were the creators. The Jews indeed offered the nations a counterfeit progress which mirrored the true progress of the Aryans. Hitler's tripartite model thus translated into geopolitics what was essentially the old Christian model in which God and the devil fought over the soul of man. The peoples of the world were to be given the choice of allying with either the godlike Aryan or the demonic Jew. Hitler clearly saw geopolitics as a titanic struggle between creators and destroyers over who would control the preservers. In effect, this was a contest between an Aryan humanity and a Jewish antihumanity for a variegated subhumanity. Unfortunately, Hitler believed, the Jews were winning that struggle.

In the Hitlerian worldview, the imminent victory of the Jews was heralded by the growing power of the United States and the Soviet Union. These two states were, for Hitler, two opposing but similar microcosms, each of which reproduced on a regional level the contradictions of the world as a whole. Both Russia and America, he believed, were made up of all three categories of humanity. Originally, Hitler claimed, each super-state was ruled by a Germanic minority, a creative Aryan aristocracy holding sway over a variegated collection of inferior culture-preserving races and culture-destroying Jews. He thus proclaimed that the creation of the Russian Empire "was not the result of the political abilities of the Slavs" at all but rather a result of creative powers of "the German element in an inferior race." Over the ages the Russian Empire had taken "nourishment from this Germanic nucleus."[7] But in 1917, Hitler argued, the Bolshevik Revolution ousted the German and replaced it with a Jewish ruling class, thus making Russia a focal point of Jewish "infection." Meanwhile the hapless Slavs had merely exchanged a good for an evil master.

Hitler saw a similar development in the United States. Like Russia, America was inhabited by a heterogeneous collection of people sustained by a Germanic ruling class. But the ruling caste of the United States was much larger than its Russian counterpart and originally took much better care to preserve its racial identity. As Gerhard Weinberg noted, at first Hitler had many good things to say about America. He admired its subjugation of its black and red to its white citizens, approved of its antimiscegenation laws, endorsed its policy of limited immigration and copied its experiments in forced sterilization. But even in the twenties, Hitler believed that it was the "Jews who govern the stock exchange forces of the American Union."[8] By the mid thirties, Hitler had come to see the Roosevelt "revolution" of 1933 as a kind of mirror image of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. Like Lenin, the American president jettisoned a Germanic ruling class and replaced it with a Jewish one. Hitler thus saw a strange parallel between the two potential superpowers in which each exchanged its culture-creating for a culture-destroying government. In both countries, the culture preservers continued to exist as mongrelized subhumans who took on the coloration of their new masters just as they had their old.

Clearly, Hitler regarded the United States and the Soviet Union as equally cosmopolitan and transnational. Both represented an alliance between culture destroyers and preservers he felt compelled to oppose. Each represented one side of the two-front cultural war Hitler had already been fighting since the twenties. United States capitalism and Soviet communism were as soulless as the states they dominated. Moreover, both states were "Jewish" in the sense that they were basically international in orientation. From Hitler's perspective, the American stock-exchange and the Bolshevik international states were in effect states without any territorial limit.[9]

Germany's path thus seemed clear to Hitler. Rejecting both the right's pathetic desire merely to restore the borders of 1914 (along with the monarchy which guarded them) and the left's subversive tendency to accept the borders of 1919, Hitler envisioned a Greater Germany dominating Northern Europe from the Rhine to the Urals. The creation of such a *Reich* would, so to speak, kill two birds with one stone by simultaneously expanding the territorial base of the Aryans and reducing the territorial base of the Jews. From Hitler's standpoint, *Grossdeutschland* could be established only by destroying communist Russia, just as it could be secured only by isolating democratic America.[10]

Within this context, revenge against France for the humiliation of Versailles would be a mere footnote, if a necessary one. There is little mystery why the German leader loathed the French, but he elevated what theretofore had been a mere rivalry to a critique of cosmic proportions. Hitler believed that the extreme cultural nationalism of France left it open to penetration by anyone who claimed to speak its language. Indeed, France

was nothing less than an "African state arising on European soil," stretching from Western Europe to the Congo, while the French people were "becoming more and more negrified," a state of affairs that suggested that they would be an easy target for Jewish penetration.[11] But Hitler's critique of France's cultural nationalism was also, in a subtle way, a criticism of racial cosmopolitanism in general. Thus, while Hitler believed that only a unified continental Europe could oppose the growing power of the United States and the Soviet Union along with all they represented, such a Europe had to have a correct metaphysical foundation in race. A Europe united by culture alone in the French manner would be, from Hitler's perspective, not united at all. Just as the state had to be based on a certain degree of racial homogeneity, natural law dictated that a unified Europe had to be based on a hierarchy rather than a promiscuous fusion of peoples of unequal racial value in which the Germans would be swallowed up in a Eurasian sea. From Hitler's perspective, it made little sense for the Europeans to fight against America and Russia only to replicate their unnatural ethnic organization. What was needed, he believed, was not a European League of Nations but a Europe dominated by Germany.

It was within this framework that Hitler proposed a counter-alliance of culture creators and culture preservers. He began with a British Empire that almost from the beginning excited both his admiration and his fear. Valiant opponents during the war, the British had nevertheless joined with the decadent French to wrack a terrible vengeance on the *Reich*. Hitler always had a certain ambivalence toward that island which in some ways seemed far more "Aryan" than Germany but in other ways far less so. On the one hand, the British sometimes behaved as archetypal creators. Their domination of a worldwide empire (including several hundred million Indians) with a minuscule army seemed to the German leader a textbook case of superior racial elements ruling their inferiors.[12] Moreover, in their colonies they developed the kind of symbiosis between culture creators and preservers that Hitler believed was necessary to oppose the Jewish destroyers. On the other hand, the British were a nation of traders and merchants. Their dependence on sea power, their worldwide connections and their scattered colonies gave their empire a diaspora-like character which seemed to contradict Hitler's physiocratic ideal of a territorially unified state. The British even waged war differently than the other powers. Possessing no real standing army, they preferred "economic conquest" to military conquest.[13] Britain thus pursued what seemed to be an almost unnatural policy of eschewing any claim to continental hegemony while opposing any other European nation who sought it. This alone seemed to preclude an alliance between the British Empire and Greater Germany.

If Hitler ascribed to the British a number of almost "Jewish" characteristics, he nevertheless spent a good deal of time explaining why these characteristics were Aryan after all. For example, having pointed out the

British tendency to substitute diplomacy for war, he quickly added that "diplomacy" was justified since it too ensured "that a people does not heroically perish, but is practically preserved."[14] Britain, he tried to convince himself, was like other nations after all. Even its policy of mindlessly opposing continental hegemony was overexaggerated. Hitler thus concluded that the British would have been willing to support a dominant continental power as long as that power had renounced any claim to the sea. More significantly, he reasoned, the rise of the United States and the Soviet Union demanded a diplomatic revolution in which Britain would reverse its policy of opposing continental unity in favor of one endorsing it. The British Empire would then join the German *Reich* in an epochal struggle against the soulless internationalism of Russian and American Jewry. Self-interest alone demanded that the British oppose the rising naval power of the United States at the same time that the Germans opposed the growing land power of the Soviet Union. Hitler thus hoped for what in effect would be a full partnership with Britain, advocating a kind of division of labor in which the British would be the Aryans of the sea and the Germans would be the Aryans of the land.[15] Indeed, in a projected world free of Jews, Britain would be able fully to take over those Jewish functions that were still necessary.

But Hitler's proposed Anglo-German alliance would merely be the core of a more complex Eurasian block which would include the Italians and the Japanese also.[16] From almost the beginning of his political career, he was strangely drawn to these two peoples. While the Italians would neutralize French opposition to German growth if given a free hand in the Mediterranean, Japan would oppose both the United States and the Soviet Union.

Now, on the surface, these proposed alliances suggested that geopolitical practice outweighed racial theory, as Rauschning might argue. It is true that of the three powers to whom he wished to yoke Germany's destiny, Hitler considered the British alone fully Aryan. In contrast, he had little illusions about the so-called Aryan characteristics of either Italy or Japan. But Hitler's tripartite typology gave him room to maneuver without really losing ideological consistency. There was thus no question of a hypocritical assertion of either Japan or Italy as Aryan nations, as Robert Waite suggests.[17] His admiration for the Italians and the Japanese was not based on their position as culture creators but on their status as culture preservers who happened to be both relatively impervious to the Jewish destroyers and geopolitically well placed to work with Germany. Both Italy and Japan, for example, possessed a geographic unity far beyond anything experienced by Germany. On top of that, Italian fascism implicitly opposed "Jewish" internationalism even if Mussolini himself was not overtly anti-Semitic, while Japanese racial homogeneity precluded infection by the "Jewish" virus.[18] Both Italy and Japan thus possessed a kind of natural fascism which

preceded their political fascism.[19] Most important of all, neither Italy's nor Japan's immediate national interest conflicted with that of Germany.

Actually, Hitler's insistence on the supremacy of national self-interest dovetailed nicely with his political economic ideas as described above. Because Hitlerism sought to give the nation a metaphysical foundation in nature, it stigmatized internationalism as unnatural (and thus Jewish). But to fight against the internationalism of both Russia and America, and thus to expand German power, mere nationalism was not enough. To oppose "Jewish" internationalism, it was necessary to invent a kind of "Aryan" (and thus "nationalist") internationalism. This compromise between the national and the international took the form of the "sphere of influence" or "great space" described so eloquently by Franz Neumann.[20] Hitler's geopolitics was based on these great spaces. To start with, continental Europe was to become a Germanic sphere of influence, just as the Mediterranean would belong to Italy and east Asia to Japan. Britain, of course, would retain its empire as a "great space." Conversely, Hitler seems to have envisioned restricting America to the Western Hemisphere and pushing the Soviet Union back beyond the Urals. In a sense, then, Germany, as well as Italy and Japan, would be upgraded from dynastic states, just as the United States and the Soviet Union (perhaps transformed into a rump Slavic state beyond the Urals) would be downgraded from world states into *Reichs*. In this way, unnatural forms of government would be replaced by truly natural forms which would someday struggle with each other for ultimate possession of the earth itself once the Jews were defeated.

Hitler's "great space" notions had important implications for diplomacy and the concept of international law that underpinned it. These notions suggested the ousting of the "Jewish" principle of international law *between* nations by an "Aryan" international law that functioned *within* the great spaces of powerful nations. That law, which varied from space to space, would fix a hierarchical relationship between each space's dominant *Volk* and the inferior peoples who lived within its sphere. Each sphere of influence would thus constitute its own *Reich* whose population would be bound together by a natural law reminiscent of the ancient "law of peoples" that governed relations between Roman citizens and noncitizens within the empire itself. Within a *Reich*, citizens would occupy the masculine sphere while noncitizens would be relegated to an inferior "shadow sphere" outside the dominant *Volk*.[21]

From Hitler's perspective, then, no legal system could naturally determine relations between "great spaces" except the jungle law of self-interest. In his proposed new world order, Britain, Italy and Japan would naturally cooperate with Germany because it was in their best interest to do so, and for no other reason. In particular, this cooperation was possible not only because they faced a common enemy but because they possessed more or less mutually exclusive spheres of influence. Otherwise, no power was

supposed to interfere in the affairs of another.[22] America and Russia should stay out of the Continent, thus allowing Germany to organize Europe by force. But, in fact, Hitlerism not only implied a kind of Monroe Doctrine for Germanic Europe but also one for each of the "great spaces" of his allies as long as they continued to exist as independent powers. Of course, in demanding a kind of geopolitical laissez-faire he was at least superficially consistent with his belief that the only natural polity was a self-sufficient polity. From this perspective, international law was as unnatural as international trade.

## II

To understand why Hitler's ideology failed to achieve his ultimate goals it is necessary to examine its flaws. It turns out that these flaws were all more or less related. Neither Hitler's doctrine of national self-sufficiency nor the concept of mixed economy which underpinned it was the problem. On the contrary, the project of giving nationalism some kind of metaphysical foundation was a worthy goal, but Hitler resorted to a poisonous racial nationalism, and for two reasons. On the one hand, the lack of any geopolitical, religious or social basis for German unity demanded the creation of a particularly strong ideological basis for that unity. On the other hand, Hitler lacked the technical preparation to build up a powerful concept of the German people on a purely political-economic foundation. With a deficiency in ideas and a tremendous demand for them, the volkish perspective seemed made to order. In a sense, then, Hitler was a good racist because he was a poor fascist. Of course, fairness dictates we realize that German society provided a unique niche for racial nationalism. Hitler was hardly the only thinker to have taken this easy way out. If anything, his racism was a good deal subtler than that of some of his colleagues. But that only made things worse. His very cleverness in nuancing a bad idea made that idea all the more potent. In his case, it led to catastrophe.

Of course, the fascist political economy described in chapter 4 already provided a justification (or at least an explanation) for war. But Hitler's system of racial valuation alone dictated with whom to make war and when. It was precisely here that he came to grief. To start with, Hitler's racism shaped his anti-Semitism rather than the other way around. Only this can explain why that anti-Semitism had to end in catastrophe. The prerequisite for Hitler's global condemnation of Jewry was his assumption that it constituted at least a "race for itself" if not a "race in itself." But this assumption was a mere corollary of the argument that Germany had to have some sort of biological foundation. It was in this context that Hitler called for an anti-Semitism of reason to replace one of emotion.

From the beginning, Hitler's "rational" anti-Semitism had tragic implications. A mere fascist (like Mussolini) might have recognized the German-

Jewish relationship as a symbiosis taking place within the nation.[23] But because Hitler's racist vision interpreted this symbiosis as a form of parasitism, he inflicted a terrible wound on his own people. Not since Louis XIV destroyed the Huguenots had any European ruler done so much damage to his own country in the name of unity. The liquidation of Germany's immensely talented Jewish community sapped national vitality in almost every area of high culture. The emigration of Albert Einstein alone was a national catastrophe which weakened the country militarily, as Sebastian Haffner has noted.[24] But Hitler's racial theories caused him to overvalue national homogeneity. Far from strengthening Germany, his policies actually weakened it in the long run.

Within the crucible of war, Hitler's anti-Semitism simply expanded to the furthest limit of its development. In the beginning, he had grouped the creative Aryans on one side and both the culture preservers and Jewish destroyers on the other. In this context, it made sense to export the Jewish people to Germany's enemies. Such a view suggested that the expulsion of the Jews would be enough. By the time *Mein Kampf* was written, Hitler's increasing emphasis on the uniquely demonic character of the Jews was balanced by his emphasis on the uniquely creative character of the Aryan so that the three categories existed in a kind of equilibrium. Finally, at the beginning of the Second World War Hitler's animosity toward the Jews (and thus toward the United States and the Soviet Union) had developed to such an extent that he contrived to bring the culture preservers over to the Aryan creators in order to wage a common struggle against the Jewish destroyers. Thus, in his *Testament*, Hitler actually claimed that he was "quite free of all racial hatred" and had "never regarded the Chinese or Japanese as being inferior to" the Germans. On the contrary, "they have a right to be proud of their past." Moreover, he asserted, the Hindus, Chinese and Moslems "possessed qualities of their own which were superior to anything we [the Germans] could offer them."[25]

Hitler was not being hypocritical here, for in the same conversations with Bormann, he upheld his radical condemnation of the Jews. In the musings that make up the *Testament*, Hitler simply effaced the distinctions between culture creators and preservers since they now needed to unite in order to defeat the destructive Jewish "race." But since the latter was now the common enemy of all the rest of mankind, destruction as opposed to expulsion from the *Reich* could be the only "final solution." In the beginning, then, Hitler wanted to expel the Jews and send them abroad in order to save Germany and damn its enemies. But in the end, Hitler wanted to destroy the Jews in order to save the world, even if Germany had to perish in the process.

Having weakened his own country, he took on the strongest nations on earth. In particular, ideological considerations caused him to underestimate grossly both the Soviet Union and the United States. While a mere fascist

might have respected the national cohesion of these two behemoths, from Hitler's racist perspective they appeared bastardized monstrosities. They were dangerous, to be sure, but far weaker than they seemed. Of course, Hitler's tripartite geopolitical theory gave him far more room to maneuver than is generally recognized. Thus, his opinion of the United States and the Soviet Union fluctuated over the years if only within the limits of overarching theory. Broadly speaking, his feelings toward America cooled while his sentiments toward Russia warmed. While both the United States and the Soviet Union had exchanged their creative for destructive aristocracies, Stalin had at least launched a counterrevolution during the Great Purge which overthrew the new Jewish-Bolshevik ruling class. The apparent rise of a Slavic nationalist state justified Hitler's 1939 alliance with Russia since it had once again taken its place within the natural political order. But the German leader's low valuation of such a state also encouraged him to invade it only two years later. While Hitler's "physiocratic" concept of *Lebensraum* might have pointed him toward Russia, only his racism convinced him that he could conquer it.

Hitler's evaluation of America was even more unrealistic. Interestingly, Hitler the political economist would have never made the mistake of underestimating the United States. Respect for American industry probably explains why Hitler's early writings were full of an appreciation of America's immense wealth, even though his "regard for America declined sharply after 1929" thanks to "reports about the impact of the great depression on the United States."[26] But a more economically oriented thinker might have recognized that the American depression was a temporary phenomenon. As a racist, however, Hitler could only conclude that Roosevelt's "Jew Deal" had weakened the United States in the same way that Lenin's revolution had weakened the Russian Empire. An America controlled by the "Jewish" stock exchange appeared to Hitler as nothing more than "some child stricken with elephantiasis."[27] Yet he possessed no immediate territorial designs on the United States itself. What he wanted from America was that it retire to its own sphere in the Western Hemisphere. Hitler was thus increasingly infuriated by American intervention in European affairs, an intervention that violated what he regarded as the German sphere of influence.

Still, Hitler's declaration of war against America at precisely the time that he had failed to conquer Russia remains a mystery. It is hard not to suspect that, once again, ideological considerations shaped his actions. Hitler's belief that *both* the United States and the Soviet Union represented an essentially Jewish force gave his struggle a strangely symmetrical and thus aesthetically satisfying character. In a sense, his geopolitics was always shaped as much by aesthetics as by *realpolitik*. Within Hitler's worldview, the German *Volk* occupied both the temporal and spatial center of the world. Ideally, Italy and Japan would represent land-based extensions of this

center, while Britain would act as a sea-based shield around the axis. In this scheme, America and Russia were banished to the outer darkness. It is thus not hard to speculate that Hitler's symbolic equation of the United States and the Soviet Union led him impulsively to declare war against the former while still fighting the latter. Perhaps sensing defeat he sought, like some Aryan Samson, to pull down the temple on himself and his enemies alike.[28]

Racism also conditioned Hitler to fight Britain only halfheartedly at best. Believing that the British were fellow Aryans and natural allies, he had little desire to destroy them. Indeed, he was no doubt sincere in desiring to preserve an empire that had for so long excited his admiration. By no means was Hitler's analysis of Britain's eroding position in world affairs off base. His recognition that the British Empire was in decline and would soon disintegrate in a world dominated by the emerging Russian and American colossi was sound. But here too racism played Hitler false. The British people as a whole had little interest in allying with Germany and had absolutely no sense of kinship with him. The German leader later admitted this was true, although he was wont to blame Britain's elite who possessed a kind of "false consciousness" created by the Jews.[29]

Moreover, Britain continued its age-old policy of opposing any continental superpower, thus checking Hitler as it had once opposed Napoleon. Nothing had apparently changed. Meanwhile, Hitler's desire to wake the British up hamstrung his strategy. At Dunkirk, he claimed, he had prevented "an irreparable breach" between Britain and Germany by allowing the expeditionary force to escape.[30] Having inadvertently preserved his enemy's power at the same time that he pumped up its morale, he resorted to bombing out of frustration. Hitler played only halfheartedly with the notion of invasion. No doubt, if Britain had been a land power he would have quickly occupied it and set up a puppet government willing to ally with him. But as an island sea power, the British were all but invulnerable. It was ultimately unthinkable to conquer a people he wanted as allies by diverting vast resources from the war against his real enemies.

It was only in the course of the war that Hitler soured on the British people themselves. His hatred was that of a spurned lover. After 1940, Hitler began to speak of Germany as a proletarian nation fighting against the plutocratic democracies. This terminology, which seems to favor the Soviet Union over the United States, is puzzling unless it is regarded as an attack directed mainly against the British.[31] Here, Hitler's old doubts came into service. The "Jewish" characteristics of British life made it susceptible to the Jews after all. Indeed, his description of Britain seemed increasingly indistinguishable from that of the Jew. "Perfidious Albion" was dying, plutocratic and class-ridden. Hitler more and more drew a contrast between the British world economy and German national socialism. Finally, Hitler's belief that individual genius was the basis for social greatness led him to focus on the role of the prime minister. The tragedy, as the German

leader saw it, was that Germany had produced a Hitler while Britain had produced a Churchill. Churchill was the real culprit, Hitler swore, the real betrayer of his people's self-interest and the gravedigger of their empire. Meanwhile the damage had been done. Hitler had allowed Britain to remain intact as a jumping-off point for allied operations while engaged in his Russian campaign, thus reproducing the pattern of the First World War. Given his ideological commitments, it is hard to see how he could have avoided doing so.[32]

Hitler retained enough affection for the British to shift much of the anger he felt toward them to his other European allies, the Italians. Yet, Hitler's alliance with Italy had been one more fruit of his racial theory. Having long insisted that Aryan civilization was a fusion of Germanic and Roman values, he hoped to regenerate it by linking Germany with Italy. Even if the Italians were only a semi-Aryan nation tainted by admixture of inferior peoples, they remained the "legitimate sons of the ancient Romans."[33] Moreover, as culture preservers they were certainly a worthy friend in the struggle against Jewry. Later, Hitler regretted this alliance more than any other. The evolution of Hitler's assessment of Italy was almost the exact opposite of that of Britain. In the latter case, he began by finding the people sound and the leadership corrupt. In the former case, he began by finding the leadership sound and the people corrupt. In both cases, he eventually had doubts about leadership and people alike. By degrees, he came to realize that the alliance with Italy was as big a mistake as the alliance with Britain was an impossibility.

The Italians were simply decadent, an exhausted people. But Hitler blamed his Italian ally for curtailing a truly "proletarian" war against colonialism. "Had we been on our own," Hitler mused in his *Political Testament*, "we could have emancipated the Moslem countries dominated by France." Unhappily, "with our fortunes linked to those of the Italians, the pursuit of such a policy was impossible." Choosing Italy as an ally meant endorsing the notion of an Italian "great space" in the Mediterranean, thus bringing it into conflict with Islamic North Africa and the Near East. But Hitler's critique of Italy went too far. While an alliance with Arabs like the anti-Semitic grand mufti was not inconsistent with Hitler's notion of creators and preservers fighting the Jewish destroyers, a full-scale Arab rebellion would have threatened the British far more than either the Italians or the French by shattering the link between England and India. The admirer of the British Empire would hardly have been willing to pursue a strategy that destroyed that empire if he could have avoided it. More significantly, a full-scale southwestern campaign against Egypt would have drawn resources away from the war against Russia. But since everything Hitler believed in pointed toward Germany's becoming the heir to the land-based Soviet Union, why would he want to inherit the sea-based British Empire at a time when he could not have possibly absorbed it?[34]

Hitler's other criticisms of his Italian ally were fairer. Their "entry into the war at once gave our enemies their first victories." More significantly, the ill-fated Italian invasion of the Balkans led to a "catastrophic delay" in the Russian campaign and thus explained its failure.[35] Of course, Italy's entry into the war on Hitler's side opened Europe's "soft underbelly" to allied attack. Conversely, a neutral Italy would have been immune (like Spain) to allied invasion. But in making these arguments, Hitler conveniently forgot that he felt he needed Italy to isolate France in order to pursue his eastern strategy in the first place.

Of all his allies, then, only the Japanese truly lived up to Hitler's expectations. To be sure, the German and Japanese spheres of influence did not overlap in any way, thus making them perfect allies according to the "great space" theory. Moreover, the German-Japanese alliance actually fit rather than contradicted Hitler's racial ideology. For more than twenty years Hitler had defended the thesis that it was better for Germany to ally with an Asian power resistant to the Jewish virus than a Caucasian power that might succumb to it, even if this alliance meant the loss of the East to the white man. But most significantly, Japan's performance during the war seemed to mirror that of Germany in both its ferocity and its valor. Yet, Hitler's alliance with Japan also proved tragic. It was, to start with, inconsistent with the British interests he claimed to respect since the Japanese threatened India as well as Australia. The three-power alliance thus encouraged a solidification of the Anglo-American entente. The fact was that the Japanese, like the Italians, were mainly concerned with their own affairs and had little sympathy for German goals. The Japanese were too clever to start a war against Russia when they were fighting America and Britain. Indeed, since Hitler's support for Japan did not help him in his war against Russia, and only hurt his relationship with Britain, that support appears to be one more example of ideology triumphing over *realpolitik*.[36]

Finally, Hitler's racial policy prevented him from successfully organizing the German sphere of influence itself. In his system the Germans had the highest, the Jews the lowest race value, and everyone else fell in between. Hitler's failure to construct a unified sphere of influence clearly shows the bankruptcy of this ideology. Rejecting the idea of a genuine European union as a violation of the natural differences between peoples, Hitler instead attempted to create a German-dominated Europe in which perhaps a majority of the population would have been servile retainers. His model here was more Lycurgus than Augustus, and what he created was closer to the Aztec or Assyrian than the Roman Empire. The result was a continent swarming with partisans willing to die in the war against German domination. It is hard to believe that such a state would have long endured even if the Nazis had won the war.

To be sure, Hitler's geopolitics was arguably the least ideological component of his ideology, existing as it did on the border between theory and

practice. But in the end, caught between a dying dynasticism and an emerging globalism, even Hitler's foreign policy practice was limited by his theoretical presuppositions. Today's geopolitics was, after all, only a temporary set of relationships in what Hitler believed was an inexorably dynamic historical process. Even if Germany had won the war, the laws of nature itself dictated that it would eventually turn on its allies until at last "the best of humanity . . . achieved possession of this earth," no doubt as a prelude to still further and unlimited expansion in space itself. It was almost inevitable that this uncompromising dynamism would provoke the coalition of powers that destroyed it.[37]

Such was Hitler's worldview as we have seen it developed in the last few chapters. It was the Second World War that put that worldview to the test and found it wanting. Hitlerism started the war, fought the war and lost the war. As Norman Rich noted, "Open rearmament, the remilitarization of the Rhineland, the annexation of Austria, the rape of Czechoslovakia, the attack on Poland and Russia, the declaration of war against the United States, the destruction of the Jews, the racial reconstruction of Europe—these were all policies and decisions of Hitler." Above all they were policies shaped by a conscious ideology.[38] How ironic that that worldview which defined Germany's ultimate goals made it all but impossible to realize them.

## NOTES

1. For discussions of Hitler's geopolitics, see Eberhard Jäckel, *Hitler's World View* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), pp. 27–46; Norman Rich, *Hitler's War Aims: Ideology, the Nazi State and the Course of Expansion* (New York: Norton, 1992); John Hiden, *Germany and Europe, 1919–1939* (London and New York: Longman, 1993). The old question of how much those ideas differed from those of other German regimes is explored in both David Calleo, *The German Problem Reconsidered: Germany and the World Order, 1870 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 85–121, and A.J.P. Taylor, *The Origins of the Second World War* (New York: Atheneum, 1961).

2. For example, see Sarah Gordon, *Hitler, Germans, and the "Jewish Question"* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 91–118.

3. Adolph Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1943), p. 290.

4. Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Culture and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 194.

5. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, p. 291.

6. Ibid, p. 300.

7. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, pp. 654–55; *Secret Book*, pp. 135–39.

8. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, p. 639; Gerhard Weinberg, "Hitler's Image of the United States," *American Historical Review* 69 (1964).

9. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, pp. 644, 654–65.

10. For the distinction between "revanchism" and Hitlerism, see Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, p. 649, where Hitler emphasizes that "the demand for restoration of the

frontiers of 1914 is a political absurdity." This is reaffirmed in the *Zweites Buch*, pp. 104–16.

11. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, pp. 623, 644.

12. Ibid., p. 658; Adolph Hitler, *Hitler's Secret Book*. Introduction by Telford Taylor (New York: Grove Press, 1961), pp. 148–49.

13. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, p. 615.

14. Ibid.

15. For the classic analysis of Hitler's attitude toward Britain, see Andreas Hillgruber, "England's Place in Hitler's Plans for World Domination," *Journal of Contemporary History* 9 (1971): pp. 5–22.

16. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, pp. 637–40.

17. Waite, *The Psychopathic God*, p. 75.

18. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, p. 637.

19. Ibid., p. 639.

20. Franz Neumann, *Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism, 1933–1944* (New York: Octagon Books, 1963), p. 156–183.

21. Ibid., 156–166.

22. Adolph Hitler, *The Testament of Adolph Hitler: The Hitler-Bormann Documents with an Introduction by L. Craig Fraser* (Costa Mesa, CA: Noontide Press, 1978), p. 67.

23. Meir Michaelis, *Mussolini and the Jews* (Oxford: Claredon, 1978), pp. 10–42.

24. Sebastian Haffner, *The Meaning of Hitler* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), p. 104.

25. Hitler, *Testament*, pp. 16, 26.

26. Rich, *Hitler's War Aims*, p. 238; Weinberg, "Hitler's Image," pp. 1010.

27. Hitler, *Testament*, p. 84.

28. Haffner, *Meaning of Hitler*, p. 116; Rich, *Hitler's War Aims*, pp. 237–46. According to John Toland, "an outright declaration of war [against the United States] was in line with his [Hitler's] ideological world view. Why not make 1941 the year in which he declared total war upon the two major enemies of human survival—international Marxism (Russia) and international finance capitalism (America), both the creatures of international Jewry?" See Toland, *Adolph Hitler*, p. 2:796.

29. Hitler, *Testament*, p. 5.

30. Ibid., p. 72.

31. Adolph Hitler, *Hitler's Table Talk, 1941–1944: His Private Conversations*, trans. Norman Cameron and R. H. Stevens (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1973), pp. 20, 264.

32. For Hitler's assessment of Churchill, see Hitler, *Table Talk*, pp. 72, 179, 202; *Testament*, pp. 1–5. It is significant that Hitler's *Testament* begins with his condemnation of Churchill and Britain for failing to come over to his side.

33. Hitler, *Testament*, p. 44.

34. Ibid., pp. 44–45. Hitler's distaste of colonialism seems more than mere posturing since it was consistent with his physiocratic notion of natural states based on solid blocks of territory, a notion at the heart of his critique of Wilhelmine policy. While, as Hillgruber notes, Hitler occasionally alluded to the possibility of establishing colonies at a later date, such colonies would have been mere weapons in projected struggles against other great territorial powers. As I have suggested,

Hitler saw colonies as essentially unnatural formations. But see Hillgruber, "England's Place," pp. 10–11.

35. Hitler, *Testament*, pp. 46–47.
36. Ibid., p. 52.
37. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, p. 383.
38. Rich, *Hitler's War Aims*, p. xli.

# Epilogue

The fall of Germany in 1945 clearly marked a watershed in the movement toward relativism and globalism. In a real sense, Hitler's defeat implicitly became the defeat of the European nation-state and the Enlightenment values that underpinned it. Germany's heirs, the United States and the Soviet Union, were both fundamentally transnational, multiracial empires whose territories were seemingly unlimited. Each implicitly sought to set policy on a global scale in which national boundaries counted for nothing. Both "empires" apparently represented a phase of development that had transcended the philosophes' concept of nationality.

Of course, that concept had already been under attack since the late nineteenth century, at a time when Western imperialism was still uniting the world. In his 1895 novel *The Time Machine*, H. G. Wells had shown how Darwinism implied that the Marxist notion of earthly paradise was as much of an illusion as the heavenly paradise of the Christians. In the same vein, Nietzsche more or less argued that the Enlightenment attempt to create the nation as a secular substitute for salvation represented a fundamental failure of nerve. Even Freud, at least after his repudiation of the seduction theory, regarded Marxism and nationalism as mere "illusions." But the jettisoning of the Enlightenment project was also the repudiation of its attempt to construct a natural hierarchy of value. If value was neither transcendent nor immanent, if neither God nor an ideal type of man represented the epitome of value, then every human being was potentially equal. Consumer capitalism seemed to put a special stress on the idiosyncratic desire of each person even as it also stressed the increasingly international character of economic life. Within this context, the hierarchical order of sex and race which had originally sustained bourgeois nationalism has

been disintegrating since the late nineteenth century. The idea of the nation, the quintessential Enlightenment concept, has thus been under attack from all sides. Meanwhile, the increasing relativization of values is encouraged by the ever greater globalization of the economy and the consequent emergence of a multinational business elite.

But this disintegration of value, which takes the democratic model to its furthest limit, is very problematic. Greater individualism seems to have brought both greater freedom and greater slavery with it. Meanwhile, the last vestige of humanistic (let alone Christian) values seem to be disappearing. Remember that existentialism sought to construct a last-ditch defense of some kind of humanism by simultaneously attempting to preserve the idea of valuation while accepting that all people were equal. But Michel Foucault and his epigones throughout the West went even further by challenging the notion of valuation itself, even though they did not give up the notion of some kind of ethics. Of course, the seeming impossibility of creating value in an increasingly nihilistic culture has led to some grotesque paradoxes. Heidegger's retreat to Nazism, Sartre's embracing of Marxism and even Foucault's puzzling lionization of the Iranian revolution suggest that the failure to create a "postmodern morality" has invited the reassertion of older ideologies. Within this context, a niche clearly exists for the revival of ideas similar to if not completely derived from Hitlerism.

## I

To start with, the fall of the British Empire and the subsequent emancipation of the so-called underdeveloped world have provided fertile soil for the emergence of radically nationalist (and thus fascist) ideologies. Several factors have favored the development of this "third-world fascism." First, developing countries seeking to reproduce the material successes of the Western Enlightenment at a time when the West had already surpassed those successes tended to embrace the project of the philosophes in one form or another. David Schoenbaum thus suggested "that there might be a Third Reich in every industrializing society." Second, fraternity has often appeared more important than either liberty or equality to leaders faced with uniting heretofore scattered peoples within boundaries determined by the accidents of colonial politics. Third, nationalism is the one Western ideology that seems compatible with the preservation of indigenous cultures even if it is really not. While communism and capitalism appear explicitly Western and secular, nationalism (and thus fascism) claims to be specific to each nation that adopts it. Hitler's clever "revolutionary appeal to tradition" has thus been reproduced many times since 1945. Fourth, both capitalism and communism have appeared as extensions of the respective superpowers they represent. In contrast, fascism claims to be a special path for any emerging nation that embraces it; third-world countries have

wanted a third way. Fifth, the special path concept dovetailed nicely with the neutralist position of third-world leaders who hoped to play off the superpowers against each other. Finally, the revolutionary assertion of the colonized world under a succession of "great personalities" has helped spread the fascist notion of leadership as a means of uniting a people.[1]

The fact is that many so-called communist or capitalist regimes in the third world have in fact been fascist. Moreover, a variety of explicit forms of fascism and quasi-fascism have evolved in Europe's former colonies since the fifties and sixties. Peronism, Arab socialism and even African socialism all sought to create nationalist mixed economies which implicitly rejected the global pretensions of both the United States and the Soviet Union. Arab socialism, for example, has postulated the existence of an Arab *Volk* which must eventually be united. Abdel Gamel Nasser thus sought to construct a United Arab Republic while Saddam Hussein has proclaimed "the present divisions" of the Arabs "an unnatural state which must be ended with unity." This unity, the latter believes, can be achieved only by rejecting international capitalism and international communism alike and instead constructing a regional "Arab economy" which will make "the citizen in Algeria . . . feel that he has some interest in Iraq."[2] In the same way, Julius Nyerere's African socialism sought to build up a national economy by rejecting the international ideologies of both communism and capitalism.[3]

But because the whole point of fascist ideology is to give an indigenous metaphysical foundation to any nation that adopts it, that ideology is far less likely to honor European models than is its communist and capitalist competitors. Abdel Moghny Said thus rejected the notion that Arab socialism has anything in common with Nazism, rooting it instead in an "Arab and Islamic cultural heritage far older than Western socialism."[4] Similarly, Nyerere sought to build his socialism on the basis of an African "family society" inconceivable to the thoroughly secularized West.[5] Both the African and the Arab experiences thus suggest that third-path ideologies incorporate local religious traditions which they secularize but do not completely jettison.

While the third-path ideologies of the so-called developing world may be regarded as fascist in the broadest sense, their relationship to Hitlerism is less clear. Basically, third-world ambivalence toward Hitler has mirrored the German leader's ambivalence toward the British Empire and the colonial system it represented. As noted above, Hitler simultaneously admired the British Empire as an example of the Aryan will to power and despised it as a crypto-Jewish structure based on overseas colonies. If Hitler's attempt to ally with Britain in order to sustain Aryan supremacy made him unpalatable to third-world nationalists in general, his ultimate fight against the British won him the admiration of colonial peoples from Ireland to India, including the Afrikaaners. At the same time, our suspicion of the

"influence theory" of intellectual history should warn us against the notion that even a leader like Hussein is a mere clone of Hitler. In particular, third-world fascism, sensitive to white racism, has attempted to give nationalism a metaphysical foundation without resorting to race. In that sense, Mussolini more than Hitler, is the godfather of the emerging nationalisms of the "underdeveloped world."[6]

## II

If third-world fascisms have ended up being more nationalist than racist, first- and second-world fascisms have up to now been more racist than nationalist. During the Cold War struggle between communism and capitalism, the embers of racial nationalism seemed to go out in the industrialized world. But the end of the Cold War and the accompanying economic upheavals have led to a revival of ideologies reminiscent of national socialism in Europe as well as in the former Soviet Union and the United States. The E.E.C. has seen a revival of neo-Nazi activity, but even the German "skinheads" have directed their main hatred against the non-European "guest workers." Preoccupied with the influx of vast numbers of dark-skinned foreign workers, Western European neo-Nazis appear more anti-colored than anti-Semitic, identifying themselves with white Europe as a whole rather than with the revival of any particular nation. Ironically, however vicious, Euro-fascism may differ from Hitlerism by accepting the idea of a cooperative Europe as long as that Europe excludes Turks, Arabs, Hindus and other "foreigners."[7]

In the United States, as in the former Soviet Union, the survival of racial nationalism since 1945 has had far graver implications. The problem is that the two superpowers were not really nation-states at all in a European sense, but rather transnational empires whose respective cultures each represented a synthesis of several earlier civilizations. Russia thus constituted a fusion of Byzantine, Asiatic and European elements, while America combined Amerindian, Hispanic, African and Anglo traditions. Empires like the Soviet Union and the United States resemble Rome in that they cannot survive on the basis of narrowly defined conceptions of ethnicity since their existence depends on the possibility of recruiting outside groups. The survival of the Roman Empire thus hinged on its ability to Romanize the peoples it conquered, while the United States has depended on its capacity to absorb ethnic and racial minorities that might otherwise succumb to the virus of nationalism. If the Soviet Union has collapsed before our eyes as its empire dissolves into many nations pitted against each other in white-hot hatred, the United States is similarly threatened by those racial nationalists who wish to transform this empire into a set of mutually exclusive states based on the most narrowly defined principles. The growing talk of "Aryan," black or Hispanic states must thus be taken seriously.

The discussion of Hitlerism in the previous chapters helps us understand the implications of racial nationalism for the Soviet Union and the United States. As we have seen, Hitler believed that race was the *natural* foundation for political organization. In contradistinction to Mussolini and other fascists who believed that the state creates the race, Hitler taught that the race creates the state. But this narrow definition of nationality prevented him from grasping the inner workings of inclusive polities like the Roman Empire, the Soviet Union or the United States. Since multiracial states were doomed to failure, Hitler believed, great empires could exist only as extensions of national states in which the state race dominated a number of other races without interbreeding with them. The German leader thus profoundly misunderstood the Roman Empire, just as he underestimated both the Soviet Union and the United States in the Second World War. Hitler's exclusivist definition of the state led him to believe that the Roman state came to an end because it ceased to distinguish between ethnic groups, when in fact it was precisely Rome's capacity to recruit wave after wave of foreigners to its cause that allowed it to endure so much longer than other ancient empires. Again, Hitler believed that both the Soviet Union and the United States were mongrelized states doomed to destruction if they failed to recapture the pure blood of their Germanic "state-forming" elements. For Hitler, like our contemporary racial nationalists, the problems of both the Soviet Union and America were rooted in race.[8]

In fact, whatever racial problems existed in the two superpowers in Hitler's time may actually have been exacerbated by the Cold War. That struggle more or less contributed to the bankruptcy of both the United States and the Soviet Union. Just as the contraction of the Soviet economy helped shatter that polity into a host of competing nationalities, so the contraction of our own economy has threatened to dissolve the United States into several races. The breakup of the union left the Russian republic a second-rate nation with a population smaller than that of Indonesia. Meanwhile, the racial component of Russian nationalism has become increasingly evident with the rise of Vladimir Zhirinovsky. Just as Hitler once saw Germany as the bulwark of Aryan humanity against Bolshevism, Zhirinovsky sees Russia as the white race's shield against a multiracial Islamic world. Knowingly or unknowingly, Russian fascism has also revived the "great space" theory by demanding mutually exclusive spheres of influence for Russia and America as a price for cooperation against the growing power of the third world and Islam. Zhirinovsky's Liberal Democrats thus demand a Russian "Monroe Doctrine" in which they would control Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan as well as central Asia. Zhirinovsky, predictably, sees this new nationalism as a third path between an international communism and an international capitalism equally dangerous to the Russian state. Given the failures of Gorbachev and Yeltsin, a fascist program has a certain attractiveness. It is hard not to wonder, though, if that

program would not ultimately be catastrophic to the Russian people by precipitating a racial and religious war that they cannot win. Ironically, a fascism based on non-racist principles might have preserved the Soviet Union, and thus created a much greater power than one based on the more limited population of Great Russia.[9]

The dissolution of the Soviet Union and the possible construction of a Russian race-state provides a terrible reminder of just how dangerous racial nationalism is to the continued existence of the United States. If America won the Cold War, its victory was a Pyrrhic one. The economic stress resulting from first fighting and then ending the Cold War has reactivated racial fault lines in the United States as well as in the former Soviet Union. The result has been a proliferation of racist groups of all colors calling for independent white, Hispanic and black states on American soil. The group Aryan Nations, for example, demanded "a great white migration to the Pacific Northwest—the '10 percent solution' of creating a white homeland in five of the fifty states," an idea reminiscent of earlier talk about a black state in Dixie or a Chicano state in the Southwest.[10] The collection of "skinhead" groups, ex-members of the KKK, and white supremacists of all stripes seem to be united in demanding a separatist society in one form or another, if only because they increasingly recognize the sheer difficulty of deporting millions of so-called "unassimilable" Americans.[11] Ironically, white nationalism also seems to be picking up some of the rhetoric and strategy of black and Chicano nationalist movements.

More ominous has been the rise of the Christian Identity movement which, if Michael Barkun is correct, is increasingly providing an ideological center of gravity for white supremacists and separatists. Followers of Christian Identity see the Aryans as the real descendants of the Old Testament Israelites while stigmatizing the Jews as counterfeit Israelites of Satanic origin. The Jews, by controlling the Zionist Occupied Government (ZOG) in Washington, are deliberately poisoning the white race through pornography, homosexuality and race mixing. ZOG is thus illegitimate, a belief that nicely dovetails with the programs other extremist groups like the Posse Comitatus who oppose centralized authority. In the end, adherents to Christian Identity believe, the struggle between the true (Aryan) and the false (Jewish) Israelites will result in an apocalyptic race war. While Christian Identity resembles Germanic Christianity by seeking to give Jesus and his religion an Aryan ancestry, the American cult differs from its European analog in opposing a centralized government. Suspicious of ZOG, Christian Identity easily takes on a survivalist or anarchist character.[12]

If the Aryan myth gave a metaphysical foundation for the German state, that same myth now threatens to destroy the American state by shattering it into its component parts. For example, a poster ostensibly put out by the group White Aryan Resistance (WAR) shows a muscular, blond young man attacking an Uncle Sam with Jewish stars on his hat and sleeve. The cartoon

is significant because it might have depicted an Aryan Uncle Sam fighting a caricature of a Jew. Instead, Uncle Sam himself is depicted as the enemy. The white racial nationalist, like his black analogue, is clearly more loyal to his race than to his nation. Uncle Sam and the centralized state that he represents is the enemy for both. In an interview with James Ridgeway, Tom Metzger (the leader of WAR) thus argued that it was "good that central power be weakened and split up" and claimed he was willing "to have meetings with peoples of other races about splitting up geography in a real idea of separatist states." Because Uncle Sam appears to embody an irrevocable cultural miscegenation, American racial nationalists actually stand in opposition to statism and thus to fascism. Conversely, any American fascism would have to oppose racial nationalism if its goal was to preserve the United States as a world power.[13]

What Hitler said in the thirties is thus what our racial nationalists are saying today: namely, that a genuinely inclusive multiracial nation violates the natural order of things. The United States must either be a white-dominated state or a collection of breakaway republics made up of this or that group. Yet the dis-uniting of America would be no easy task. It would be one thing to give, say, Idaho to the Aryan Nations and South Carolina to the Black Liberation Front, but how could we disentangle the various racial and ethnic strands that make up our cultural fabric? One suspects that the result would be the same as disentangling the various organs in an individual's body. The individual would die, and the organs too. For the United States is simply not a collection of cultures and races that can be separated at will, but a synthesis of Native American, Hispanic and Anglo, of black and white elements. It is in fact a new civilization. Nor is it any accident that jazz, one of the most precious creations of that civilization, was regarded with such hatred by Nazism, which could see it only as an unnatural miscegenation of racial elements. The disintegration of the Soviet Union thus provides a clear lesson for the United States. If racial nationalism has its way, "white" America would be reduced to a rump state of, say, eighty million people, powerless in an international order they once had the ability to shape, a state of affairs strangely analogous to that of Great Russia today. Not only morality, but *realpolitik* thus condemns racial nationalism.[14]

## III

The racist revival is no accident. If, as I suggested in an earlier book, failure to create a postmodern sexual morality ensures that older forms of sexual organization will reassert themselves, failure to create a postmodern civic morality ensures that older forms of nationalism will reassert themselves. Just as we need a postmodern morality, we need a kind of post-Enlightenment nationalism if only as a transitional ideology. Modern states, above all America, need a philosophical foundation that neither capitalism

nor communism can provide. The race myth will continue to tempt us unless the American polity can be given a genuine metaphysical foundation. To understand (and thus to help preserve) America, it is necessary to recognize that there is at least a grain of truth in the fascist position. Just as Hitler destroyed Marx by separating the socialist idea from class, so we can destroy Hitler only by separating the nationalist ideal from race! But to achieve this we need to jettison those outmoded European concepts of nationality that continue to infect our intelligentsia. A new civilization demands new categories, and Americans need not despair if by European standards they do not constitute a nation. In this context, cultural conservatives and radicals alike must recognize that the United States is not now, nor has it ever been, a white European society. The quicker we realize this fact, the quicker we can purge our country of the race myth.

I do not wish to suggest, of course, that rethinking our racial problems will get rid of them. The present conflict in the United States has a real basis in history. If America has been a multiracial society, its various races have never occupied equally favored positions. But race will matter less if we see it as a creation rather than the creator of history. Then the United States, which created its races in order to grow, can uncreate them in order to live.

Uncreate race! The very idea will certainly cause as much uneasiness among cultural radicals as among conservatives. While the latter want homogeneity and the former diversity, both can talk only in racial terms. It sometimes seems that conservatives want everyone to be white while radicals want to be anything but white. The choice seems to be one between cultural imperialism on the one hand and cultural anarchy on the other. Caught between these two extremes, government has wavered between attempting to include minorities and perpetuating the conditions that exclude them. In this context, affirmative action appears as a kind of internal *realpolitik* whose function is to co-opt the natural aristocracy among minority groups, thus depriving those groups of potential revolutionary cadres. It is very much a Roman (or Ottoman) strategy, and would have been more than adequate in earlier times.[15] But in the present day, when societies are far richer, communication ever easier and self-awareness more widespread than ever before, affirmative action simply does not go far enough. In effect, it is not a solution to the race problem but a substitute for a solution. By throwing a few tidbits to certain talented members of minority groups, government simultaneously makes these groups more self-conscious and exacerbates their larger problems. We thus may have a few more black and fewer white professors at NYU or UCLA, but millions of our fellow citizens continue to live in ghettos. In this context, affirmative action has the paradoxical and dangerous effect of heightening racial consciousness at the same time that it provokes racial frustration. In effect it legitimizes discrimination *in favor* of minority elites but only as a means of preserving the discrimination *against* the minority masses. While it is true that for the

United States to survive in the short run it must recruit the former, if it is to survive in the long run it must include the latter.

If we wish to preserve the United States for which thousands of men of all colors shed rivers of blood more than a century and a quarter ago, then we must put its preservation above race. In this sense, our problem is a philosophical—even a metaphysical—one. If, like Hitler, we believe that racial or ethnic categories have some kind of eternal reality which makes them the fundamental building blocks of civil society, then our country is an unnatural construction which deserves to shatter into a thousand fragments. If not, we have a chance. But a policy based on this realization would deviate from much that is advocated by either cultural conservatives or cultural radicals.

In the first place, we need a new way of conceptualizing the American experience. It will not do simply to keep the old textbooks as some conservatives advocate or rewrite them by adding this or that percentage of black, Native American, Hispanic, women or gay "worthies" as some liberals demand. What is needed is a completely fresh approach that simultaneously recognizes diversity but only to reintegrate it into a higher unity. We need to stress that America is a synthesis, a new culture that cannot be reduced to its various components. Moreover, we must have an education system that is able to instill this redefinition of American culture. While liberal education policies have no doubt contributed to the disintegration of the public schools, the school choice idea championed by some conservatives is also problematical. The same people who call for a return to a traditional America would unwittingly destroy any future America by contributing to its cultural ghettoization. School choice would allow every racial, ethnic and linguistic subculture to set up its own institutions, thus financing the cultural fragmentation of the United States at the expense of its citizens. Rather than spend the money necessary to unite America, school choicers would spend just as much money dividing it.

In the second place, we must chart a middle course between a conservative policy of restricted and a radical policy of unrestricted immigration. Here we might once again draw an analogy with Rome. While it has been argued that the penetration of Roman borders by the so-called "barbarians" contributed to the disintegration of its civilization, the fact is that immigration from beyond the frontiers of the empire helped preserve it for several centuries by contributing wave after wave of talented, ambitious and intelligent recruits to the army and the state. This process of Romanization broke down only when, at the end of the fourth century, the rate of immigration began to accelerate.[16] In this context, American policy should not be concerned with *where* immigrants come from, but only with the *rate* at which they come. If we reject the idea of unlimited immigration as untenable, we must equally reject the belief put forth by some conservatives

that immigration should be limited on the basis of racial, cultural or geographic criteria.

In this context, linguistic unity is vital to the continued existence of the country. We need, above all, to understand each other. On the one hand, it is very important that the accent be on the American part of the phrase "American English." American English needs to absorb the expressions, culture and insights of its minority speakers so it can be a higher synthesis worthy of this country. On the other hand, there should be no objection to learning second languages as long as they are numerous. Linguistic pluralism is far less dangerous than bilingualism and dilutes its effects. But none of these goals can be readily achieved without a revitalized public school system acting as a bulwark against ghettoization.

In the third place, we should not be afraid of that dirty little word, "miscegenation." After all, from a European perspective, we are already a bastard culture. The very concept of miscegenation, of course, betrays the racial point of view we must abolish if we are to continue to be a great nation. The truth is that the United States must give up its vestigial northwest European attitudes toward interracial relationships, attitudes that once led to the prohibition of "mixed marriages" and still continue to shape adoption policy. If we follow Hitler and make race the determining factor, then we will eventually be many nations. If we make the nation paramount over race then the effect will be the gradual formation of an American race as a higher synthesis. Then the Americans will truly constitute a universal or "cosmic" people.

None of this will happen unless we get our economic house in order. I do not mean to suggest that economics determines the shape of the racial fault lines in America, merely that it helps activate them. We thus need an economic policy that helps guarantee the survival of America. But evaluated from that standpoint, *both* mainstream conservative and liberal policies have been woefully inadequate since they have tended to treat the economy as an autonomous mechanism instead of subordinating it to the higher goal of America's continued political existence. If that existence is to be safeguarded, then it is absolutely essential that the hopefully temporary division of its citizens into races be reconciled by their unity as members of the same economic class. The class divisions that may appear necessary and even desirable from a purely economic point of view thus become more problematical when placed within this larger context.

For example, both liberals and conservatives have, in great numbers, signed on to the notion of global "free trade" without seriously considering its effect on "domestic tranquility." The wide acceptance of the free-trade idea among educated circles represents a strange convergence of ideological commitments. After all, a global capitalism would accomplish many of the goals of international communism: namely, the facilitation of a "north-south" transfer of wealth and the establishment of a transnational elite

presiding over a practically unlimited supply of labor. A greater long-distance unity might be achieved, but at the expense of more short-distance disunity at home. It is thus quite conceivable that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) could raise the total wealth of the United States at the same time that it lowers the poorer classes' share of that wealth, in the process sharpening racial conflict. In this sense, a "pure" capitalism might very well be as dangerous as a "pure" communism to the continued existence of the republic. A central problem for our society will thus be how to reconcile the admitted benefits of market economy with the necessities of national cohesion. Failure to solve this problem opens up a space for the racist virus to take root. The solution is to take from Hitlerism and fascism the concept of the mixed economy as vital to sustaining the nation. But to solve this problem, we must admit it exists. Meanwhile, one gets the sense that the upper classes in our society are no longer nationalists. Cozy one-worlders all, they apparently think in purely international terms. The poorer people in this country have every reason to ask why they should give their lives in battle for a concept in which their social betters no longer believe. The latter seem to forget that if American nationalism dissolves in some "new world order," several mutually antagonistic racial nationalisms might end up replacing it here. The price for greater international cooperation may well be more local conflict.[17]

To be sure, neither conservatives nor radicals will find the ideas outlined above "politically correct." The former may suggest that too much will be lost by redefining America, while the latter may argue that America is hardly worth redefining. What, both the right and the left may ask, makes the United States any more valid than race as an organizing principle? The answer, I believe, is ultimately a Burkean one. Our nation is not the result of some abstract concept like racism, but the product of a set of real historical circumstances that have brought many peoples together. We are confronted with the objective reality of our mutual interdependence. To uphold the concept of race is, in effect, to call for a catastrophic revocation of all that has been accomplished on these shores for two centuries. America is ultimately a test of whether many peoples can come together as one people, of whether the greatest diversity can be encompassed in a higher unity, of whether rationality and goodwill can overcome passion and hatred. Within this context, the debate over economic policy can be only a means to a greater end. Before we try uniting the world, let us try uniting ourselves. Until we do so, the siren song of Hitlerism will call to us.

## NOTES

1. David Schoenbaum, *Hitler's Social Revolution: Class and Status in Nazi Germany, 1933–1939* (New York: Norton, 1966), p. xxii.

2. Saddam Hussein, *Social and Foreign Affairs in Iraq* (London: Croom Helm, 1979), p. 69.

3. Fenner Brockway, *African Socialism* (Chester Springs, PA: Dufour Editions, 1963), p. 31.

4. Abdel Moghny Said, *Arab Socialism* (London: Blandford, 1972), p. 23.

5. Brockway, *African Socialism*, p. 31.

6. For a survey of "third-world" fascisms, see Barry Rubin, *Modern Dictators: Third World Coup Makers, Strongmen, and Populist Tyrants* (New York: Meridian, 1987).

7. See Hans-Georg Betz, "The Two Faces of Radical Right-Wing Populism in Western Europe," *The Review of Politics* 55 (1993).

8. For a discussion of Hitler's ideas about Rome, see P. Villard, "Antiquité et *Weltanschauung* Hitlerienne," *Revue de la II Guerre Mondiale* 23 (1972).

9. Jill Smolowe, "No Reason to Cheer," *Time*, December 27, 1993, pp. 34–36; Carroll Bogert and Dorinda Eliott, "The Laughing Fascist," *Newsweek*, December 27, 1993, pp. 26–30.

10. Kevin Flynn and Gary Gerhardt, *The Silent Brotherhood: Inside America's Racist Underground* (New York: Free Press, 1989), p. 8.

11. For a distinction between assimilable and unassimilable Americans based on "racial" criteria, see Wilmot Robinson, *The Dispossessed Majority* (Cape Canaveral, FL: Howard Allen, 1973), pp. 49–61. Interestingly, Robinson sees parallels between America's and Russia's race problems, and argues (not withstanding Hitler's defeat) that "everything else being equal . . . a racist state can muster a deadlier military machine than a non-racist state." See Robinson, pp. 9, 451.

12. For some recent accounts of the Christian Identity movement, see Michael Barkun, "Racist Apocalypse: Millennialism on the Far Right," *American Studies* 31 (1990); James Aho, *The Politics of Righteousness: Idaho Christian Patriotism* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1990); and James Ridgeway, *Blood in the Face: the Ku Klux Klan, Aryan Nations, Nazi Skinheads, and the Rise of a New White Culture* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1991), pp. 53–54.

13. Ridgeway, *Blood in the Face*, pp. 175, 181.

14. United States racial nationalists thus condemn MTV in the same way that German Nazis condemned jazz; both cultural forms appear as an unnatural miscegenation of cultures.

15. For an example of the Ottoman Empire's policy of recruiting outsiders to state service, see Cornell Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa Ali* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986).

16. See Michael Grant, *The Fall of the Roman Empire: A Reappraisal* (New York: Annenberg, 1976), for a discussion of this process.

17. It is interesting that moves toward greater European unity have been accompanied by calls for regional autonomy. Here, once again, greater long-distance cooperation may stimulate more short-distance competition.

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